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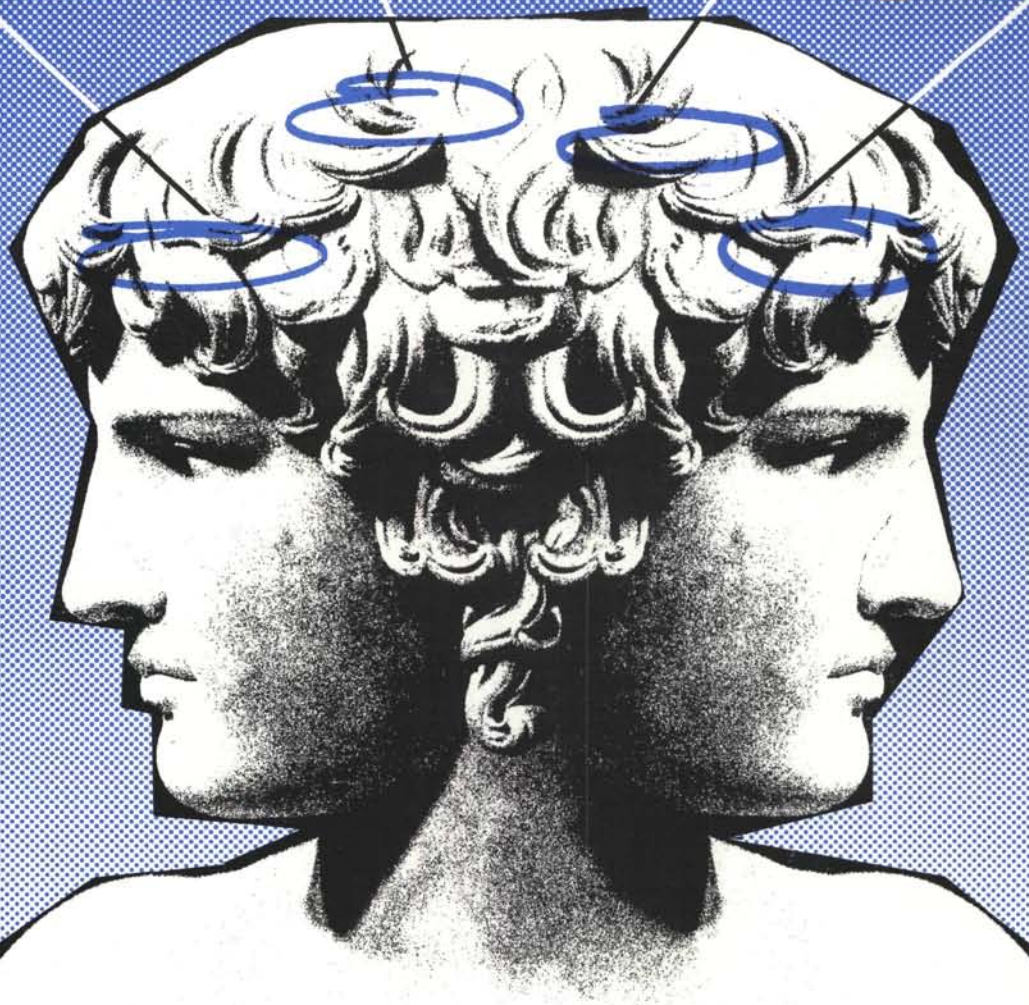

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CONTENTS

Mirror *(an apocrypha)*	*Zbigniew Herbert*	3
The Stately Roller-Coaster *(story)*	*Rose Tremain*	8
Portrait of a Father	*Heinz Kuehn*	11
The Fictions of Murderous Fact	*Jonathan Goodman*	21
Column	*M*	29

POEMS

Peter Redgrove 7, Ruth Silcock 26, George MacBeth 38, Paul Groves 48, Edward Lowbury 49, John Loveday 73

MEN & IDEAS

Karl Marx	*Richard Lowenthal*	31

NOTES & TOPICS

The Old Jewel	*Edward Pearce*	39
Grenada & the Noble Lords	*Lord Gladwyn, Lord Annan, Lord Kennet, Lord Greenhill, Lord Hankey, Lord Beloff et al.*	43

BOOKS & WRITERS

Theatre: A Question of Survival	*John Spurling*	50
Shakespeare: Reading the Score	*Ronald Hayman*	56
Film: Makers & Frames	*Alan Brownjohn*	63
Novels: Life's Victims	*James Lasdun*	69

MEMOIRS

Aron, the Committed Guardian	*Golo Mann*	74

BOXES

Caribbean Dilemma *(Dr Claudius Thomas) 40,* Europe, the US, & Grenada *(Wall Street Journal) 41*

LETTERS 79 **AUTHORS** 80 **LIFE & LETTERS** 81

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Zbigniew Herbert

Mirror

DSU-GI, THE INFLUENTIAL MINISTER of the kingdom of Tsi, was standing in front of the mirror. Neither he nor anyone else could have foreseen that this ordinary fact would be fraught with consequences and influence the fate of the state in a completely unexpected way.

A tailor had just brought him new robes to be used for important ceremonies: a scarlet coat stitched on the edges with gold, a sky-blue kimono embroidered with pagodas and flowers, dragons and moons. To these silken splendours the minister added the noble oval of his face, smooth black hair bound in an artistic braid, a shapely nose, a narrow mouth where thunder and caresses, commands and kisses lay in wait. The eyes and almond lids discreetly underlined with mascara expressed what the eyes of a dignitary should express: gentle strength. The mirror, according to naive notions, reflects the truth, as if the mirrors of those in love were not different from the mirrors of suicides—this unpredictable object that was a prey to changing moods, this same mirror was sending him admiration and courtly compliments.

Dsu-Gi was dazzled by his own handsomeness. He stood for a long time without moving, as if he wanted the image in front of him to be preserved forever.

True wisdom is content with itself, but beauty demands affirmation and applause; this is why Dsu-Gi asked his wife, "Tell me, am I more handsome than Mr Si?" (Mr Si was universally considered to embody masculine grace.) "Of course", his wife answered without hesitating. But still Dsu-Gi was not entirely convinced, so he approached his concubine with the same question. "Mr Si"—she answered—"is only handsome, while you are truly beautiful. The difference between you is the same as that between the rising sun and a star paling at dawn." Two opinions, and, what is more, of women, could not dispel Mr Dsu-Gi's doubts, so he turned to a guest who was living in his house and scrambled after favours at the royal court. For a moment the guest rather awkwardly pretended he couldn't remember who Mr Si was, finally he answered sententiously: "No one would dare to compare a peacock"—here he undoubtedly had his host and protector in mind—"with a common sparrow."

A few days passed. One afternoon the good-looking Mr Si visited the minister. Dsu-Gi observed him carefully for a long time, and came to the conclusion that that handsomeness of his guest was incomparable. After the visit he stood once again in front of the mirror. This time the mirror was restrained and cool, even repellent.

He did not sleep the entire night. He pondered. His wife considered him a paragon of beauty because they were joined by ties of love, his concubine was swayed by fearful respect, while his guest simply wanted help.

During a council with King Wei the next day, minister Dsu-Gi unexpectedly spoke up without any connection, it seemed, to the theme of the debate in progress: "I would like to tell you what happened to me just now. I know I am not exceptionally handsome, but because my beloved wife said I was, as well as my concubine who feels fearful respect for me and my guest who solicits my good graces, I frivolously came to believe it. Now, the kingdom of Tsi is great and wealthy—mountains reaching the sky and fertile fields, boisterous rivers flowing from the very centre of the earth, a hundred and twenty populous cities and a countless number of villages. The ocean at the eastern limits of the kingdom is like a huge mirror which reflects our power. And you, King Wei, rise over your land in a cloud of universal adoration—the courtiers and concubines love you, the ministers, governors of the provinces, and the lowliest employees have fearful respect for you, while all the others expect favours from you. And this is exactly what prevents them from telling the truth."

"You have spoken truly", said King Wei. And he immediately issued a decree. "For the attention of ministers, provincial governors and the entire populace. Whoever will stand before me and in all courage tell my failings to my face will receive an award of the first degree. He who commits a criticism of my government to writing will receive an award of the second degree. For those on the streets, squares and public places who will loudly accuse me (so it reaches our ears) of an abuse of power—for them is destined the award of the third degree. Such is our will."

The chronicler adds that no sooner had the decree seen the light of day than crowds began to flow toward King Wei's palace, eager for the award and for justice. It lasted many months, and already a year later peace and justice reigned, because no one, even if he had a great desire to do so, had anything to complain about any more. The chronicler ends his edifying tale with the moral: "This is what is properly known as conquering the enemy without leaving the palace."

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THE OLD TELLERS OF FOLK TALES knew very well the manner of narration that leads through triple repetitions, as though through triple incantations, toward a happy ending. But it is precisely this symmetry of the tale, and the abyss separating the trifling effective cause from the surprising result—the small stone of minister Dsu-Gi's vanity falling in the water that produces wide circles, awakens dormant impulses in the kingdom of Tsi, and finally the ending that comforts hearts longing for order—all this arouses our distrust.

The true course of events was like this.

After the proclamation of the decree encouraging open criticism of the government, very few people appeared at the royal palace. From the perspective of the throne this was a completely incomprehensible phenomenon. And King Wei was filled with outrage. Hadn't he guaranteed freedom of speech with his word? Didn't he free all prisoners, and command the hated guardians of order called "hounds" by the people to be sent to work in the silver mines? Why then did these few who appeared before him drop their eyes to the ground, stammer totally incomprehensible complaints and bow low asking for forgiveness?

On the other hand, complaints in writing flowed in with such abundance (if a deluge may be called an abundance of water) that a separate Ministry of Laments had to be created. It employed an increasingly large number of scribes and officials; the employees—as employees usually do—set to work eagerly in the beginning, considering every petition and each individual complaint, but soon they could no longer keep up with this task surpassing their strength. In the beginning they sent reports to the king that were precise and detailed, but later they became more and more general and foggy. In the end they were concerned only with an inventory of incoming letters, classifying them in huge portfolios: "Murders", "Tortures", "Expropriations", "Extortion by Provincial Governors", and "Bribery of Employees."

Oral criticism, given the lowest award by the royal decree, was practised literally by everyone. Never before had the inhabitants of the kingdom of Tsi moved their mouths with such eagerness. However, not counting a few madmen probably intoxicated by rice vodka, the complaints were spoken in a low voice, in a whisper, so they wouldn't reach the royal ears that longed for the truth. On the other hand they brought immeasurable relief to the speakers.

The good King Wei did not understand what was happening around him, only that the wrongs done to his subjects were great. So he summoned to his palace Mr Dsu-Gi, who was now his closest advisor, chief ideologist, investigator of public opinion (because that monster had finally been liberated), and designer of a better future all in one person.

"I *am not at all certain*"—said the king—"if it is necessary to see one's true face in the mirror. Perhaps it is good for philosophers, but not for rulers. Until now it seemed to me that I knew myself and my subjects quite well. I visited cities and sometimes even out-of-the-way villages—of course, you know such inspections don't change anyone's fate, they are only the confirmation of my divine omniscience—and simple people came to me carrying gifts, flowers, frightened smiles. Probably we were living in an illusion: they thought I was the embodiment of wisdom and goodness, I on the other hand was sure of their inexhaustible submission. Two illusions made a pact with each other. And this is how it ought to be. Now I don't know anything. How can an uncertain king govern an uncertain people?"

To this minister Dsu-Gi replied: "You are mistaken, because you have accomplished a deed future generations will speak about with admiration. You have untied tongues, made people happy, and granted them the priceless privilege of speaking about their grievances. A king who prohibited people from wailing for their dear dead would be considered a tyrant more cruel than one who commits violence and crimes. Tears and complaints reconcile a person with the world. They make it possible to bear destiny more easily."

In the domain of dialectics King Wei was a lamb, and he wasn't very convinced by this breakneck reasoning. Besides he didn't understand exactly what "wailing" and "grievances" were, for he knew these words only from dictionaries and poetry. "All right", he said, "but you do admit that we haven't accomplished anything to make justice reign in our kingdom. Everything remains as it was before. We haven't paid out a single piece of silver from our treasury, we haven't given anyone an inch of ground or a bowl of rice. In a word, not a single one of the complainers has received satisfaction."

"That is true", Mr Dsu-Gi replied. "But we can't do this, because those who have been wronged are too many." (Here he mentioned an approximate, indeed a frightening number.) "If out of this mass we selected only a part, then that would be a flagrant injustice." And after a moment of thought he added: "We must take one more step to make our subjects happy. While reading various complaints I noticed that no one had any resentment against you, instead the entire anger of the people is directed against the provincial officials. This is why they ought to be sacrificed on the altar of justice." Then he briefly explained what he had in mind.

IN THE CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM at the Square of Heavenly Clemency a ceremonious decapitation of officials took place. Great masses of people came from the remotest reaches of the kingdom of Tsi. The event occurred in solemn silence. In the eyes of the crowd was astonishment, bliss, and cruel innocence.

The happiness of the people then was indeed difficult to describe. For fear that it might become boundless (the time was given the appropriate name, The Period of the Spring Torrent), it was necessary to watch carefully that the enthusiasm did not transgress reasonable limits. After consulting with the king Mr Dsu-Gi decided to

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suspend the Great Reforms for an unspecified time. And he devoted himself to theoretical writings.

The fruit of these efforts was a monumental work with the sweeping title *T'ien Ming*, or *Heaven*. The title was somewhat misleading, because the subject of the treatise was not astronomy or the affairs of the gods, or forecasting the weather, but considerations about the essence of power and the relation of the king to his subjects—if one doesn't count a number of rather chaotic trains of thought woven into the work, and also many quite fine poems singing the praises of morning fog, snowy mountain peaks, a butterfly and a frog. The confusion of subjects can be explained by the author's weariness from soaring flights of thought and a desire to show his other, human face, the face of a man turned toward the earth.

No one knew that the kingdom of Tsi was a country of so many philosophers, and it was they who began to "thresh" the work of Mr Dsu-Gi with passion and the cruelty characteristic of philosophers; that is, to clean it of empty words, rhetorical ornaments, undefined concepts and cardinal faults in reasoning, for example risky conclusions drawn from uncertain premises. In the history of the kingdom this period bears the name "The Period of A Hundred Schools", and "A Hundred" designates a great number.

Why, asked the philosophers, did Mr Dsu-Gi so stubbornly contradict the generally accepted view that two forces exist above the king, two fundamental courts of appeal, namely Heaven, and the Shadows of Respected Ancestors? After all it was precisely these which permitted judgment on a ruler and his rule in the absolute categories of good and evil as well as in worldly categories, historical and established by tradition. Why, categorically negating Heaven and the Ancestors, did the author introduce in their place a completely unclear term, "The Relentless Pulse of History", and a primitive method, namely the repetition of this obscure expression on almost every page, endowing it in this manner with the characteristics of existence and cosmic force? In addition Mr Dsu-Gi maintained in all seriousness that he had absolute knowledge of what will be, but did not know how to analyse clearly what is. In short the philosophers of "A Hundred Schools" considered the treatise *T'ien Ming* was the work of a demagogue. After a thorough threshing of the treatise only a handful of axioms, tautologies, aporias and internal contradictions were left.

Mr Dsu-Gi did not defend himself (for a long time he had given up his confrontations with the mirror), because he knew that true greatness cannot find understanding among contemporaries. He accepted his fate, certain that "The Relentless Pulse of History" would prove him right. He only commented that his work was not intended for intellectuals but for ordinary people who despised subtle notions and, instead, loved the imperative aspect, simple statements and formulas that were easy to remember (he passed over in silence the fact that ordinary people at that time did not possess the difficult art of reading). Philosophers, Mr Dsu-Gi said, were like the shadows of fishermen who fished for the shadows of fish in a non-existent lake. The continuation of the discussion was easy to predict and no one was surprised. The philosophers were condemned and exiled. They hid in inaccessible mountain cloisters. This is how The Period of A Hundred Schools ended, officially known as The Period of Malicious Spiders.

THE AUTHORS OF UTOPIAS situate their perfect societies on an imaginary map in almost inaccessible places, isolated from the invasion of brutal reality and under the undisturbed sky of the mind. Unfortunately the kingdom of Tsi was subject to the laws of all earthly creations; it was heavier than thought, palpable, three-dimensional, determined by space and time, and had physical frontiers. Other kingdoms were beyond its borders and their rulers did not like the weak King Wei at all, nor Mr Dsu-Gi with his unpredictable reforming zeal, and least of all—it isn't known why—a happy people. Rebellions occur which are born in the very depths of desperate poverty, this has been generally known for a long time. But there are other rebellions, and who knows if they aren't more dangerous, that can break out at a point when people are given a brief moment of illusory freedom. The natural condition of subjects is one of moderate misery.

The ambassadors of neighbouring states showered King Wei with compliments. They praised his discernment and courage—but these were false mirrors in which the credulous ruler looked at himself with pleasure, unaware, alas, of his fate.

Without a declaration of war the army of the kingdom of Dshao crossed the Hoango River in the early fall, destroyed the border garrisons and quickly moved deep into the country. And then for the first time in history King Wei announced a mass mobilisation. All men hurried to the aid of the imperilled homeland with whatever was at hand. On a huge plain near the city of Lo-yong, flails, axes and hammers achieved a splendid victory over the invading army.

What were the people of the kingdom of Wei fighting for with such zeal and devotion? Why were they giving their lives without a word of complaint or rebellion? Was not their state as cruel and repressive as all the other countries of the time? Only Mr Dsu-Gi, he alone knew the answer. The subjects of the kingdom of Wei fought for freedom, strictly speaking for the preservation of their beloved, priceless freedom of whispering. This is not much—you will say—and yet. . . .

Thus this wider version of the tale about the mirror ends optimistically like the first, even more so, with the fanfare of victory. At this point the poetics of the fairy tale demand a farewell to the listeners. Nevertheless an epilogue exists which seems only on the surface to be an entirely different story.

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THE OFFICIAL VERSION OF THE WAR was inscribed on bronze tablets. Also, numerous poets and painters celebrated it. But after the passage of centuries the results of their efforts seem strangely unconvincing and pale.

Art, and especially courtly art (no other was known at that time), often swerves from historical truth. For it is easier to win a battle than to conquer old artistic conventions, that is, to reveal new content. And yet the content was completely new.

This is why we feel a certain impatience with long and boring poems that praise a ruler and don't have a single word about the heroic struggle of ordinary people. Everything is reduced to an archaic topos: the struggle of two Giants in which the victor, that is King Wei, took no part at all in the military operations and had an insignificant influence on the course of events.

The painters managed this new theme much better. Their panoramic canvases teemed with wrestlers. Mobilisation for war was represented by a huge dry forest on the horizon, or an immense sandbank. For the first time the people were shown in a collective portrait —somewhat abstractly it is true, and without detail, like a natural element.

After the splendid victory King Wei was seized by a state of excitement, by unhealthy euphoria that aroused understandable anxiety in the court. Ideas for absolutely fantastic reforms swarmed in his head. He wanted to reward all the defenders of the country with land, to grant titles to the bravest and make them equal to the highest dignitaries of the state. He also wondered if the time had not come for him to take the helm of state into his own hands and finally get rid of the horde of officials, ministers and courtiers.

Luckily the sober Mr Dsu-Gi was in control of the situation. He patiently explained to the king that the epoch of great changes already belonged irrevocably to the past, for his subjects had attained such a high degree of complacency and awareness that to go beyond this limit would provoke dangerous social commotion. "Both those who perished with your name on their lips and those who managed to escape unharmed", said Mr Dsu-Gi, "are equally happy, because for the first time in history they took the fate of the country on their shoulders. So it could even be said they shared power with you. And that is completely sufficient for them. So any reward would be something like contemptuous charity, or what is worse it might push them to rash actions." For this reason he also advised him to dissolve the Ministry of Laments and sternly to forbid whispering, which becomes a dangerous addiction, and little by little to return to the old tested methods of exercising power.

The irony or more exactly kindness of fate ordained that the end of The Period of Joyful Whispering, also called The Period of the Spring Torrent, came not from a decree of the good King Wei but from a sudden invasion by his neighbours. This time the kingdom of Tsi was attacked by the armies of three countries—Yen, Dshao, and Han. The only frontier not threatened was the border of the indifferent sea. Despite their heroic defence, the outcome of the war had been decided in advance.

In the general confusion it was not even noticed what happened to Mr Dsu-Gi—the main cause of these misfortunes. It was clearly realised that the reason for the military invasion by the neighbours was the experiments of the king and his advisor. And so Mr Dsu-Gi hurriedly abandoned the capital, intending to reach the monasteries in the mountains where the philosophers of A Hundred Schools were devoting their lives to asceticism and contemplation. He hoped they would forgive his mistakes and allow him to write a work in which he repudiated the Relentless Pulse of History, and a few other heresies as well, in return for modest board and the possibility of surviving history's turmoil. But when he was already on the road, someone's strong hands inflicted a quick and almost painless death.

In those times of chaos and annihilation the closest person to the king was a man of rather doubtful reputation, a certain Dshan-Guo-Tse, by profession moneylender and astrologer. There is nothing strange in this. After all, in moments when all earthly calculations fail, not only rulers but also ordinary people turn their eyes to the sky, calling on the supernatural powers for help. Each day Dshan-Guo-Tse appeared at the palace bringing horoscopes that almost exactly coincided with the terrible war communiqués. Malicious people maintained that this astrologer who so accurately foretold the immediate future possessed very down-to-earth information, probably straight from the general staff of the army over whom the final disaster was hanging.

But in those times who felt like thinking about the methodology of destiny? What was crucial was that the astrologer—only he—knew a way out of the hopeless situation. "King", said Dshan-Guo-Tse, "we can no longer save either the country or your faithful subjects. From the great fire of our world we must carry away what is most precious—your head.

"Due east of the Cape of Castaways is an uninhabited island. With good winds it can be reached in a navigation of three days. It isn't a big island but very fertile, with a mild climate, and besides it has the advantage of not being on any maps, like an undiscovered star that exists and doesn't exist at the same time. It has been forgotten by all pirates, poets and hurricanes."

So hope entered the royal heart. He ordered a small flotilla to be built, a few ships to take just what was necessary on their voyage to the new land, that is, a model of future society—two peasant families, two families of artisans, a specialist in the cultivation of silkworms, a doctor who was at the same time a diviner of water and conjuror of rain, a few animals and indispensable tools.

Merchants, bankers and artists were completely excluded from this inventory (money and imagination being rightly considered the cause of many human misfortunes), as well as all ministers, officials and courtiers.

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King Wei believed that at last he would be able to incarnate in life his beloved idea of direct government. For himself he took only his wife, his one and only concubine, and of course the astrologer.

Of the fate of this expedition, nothing certain is known. The passage of time and the lack of archaeological clues permit the worst possible conjectures. In the face of a catastrophe one should not search for the presumed instigators. It is, after all, completely unimportant whether a small error was made here by the explorer of the stars, or by the ocean.

Translated by John Carpenter and Bogdana Carpenter

Presences

The moon a thin
Bottle of stone full of salt water.

The spider in its lift-cage,
Its salt-white vehicle.

The echoes of wings caught in the web,
The beautiful long-haired corpses of wings,

The shell-thin corpses with the trailing hair
And ribs like salt tide-marks dried in sands.

A hand of bones like a shell-arrangement,
Shells of a curious sturdiness, resembling white dice.

Listen to the sea echo in the skull;
The air wanders in currents long and trailing as the hair.

The ice clamps in its contracting glass
Or on the freezing rock that condensed it.

The vast screens of the cement-works
Broken by frost, the powdered bone in draughts

Like light blowing through the gap under the door.
Open the doors, they cast vaster powdery shadows.

The statue-works, turning rock to smoke and presences
Of still people in clouds of settling dust,

Still people among the artisans flickering with their chisels,
Still people whirring on their axis in the lathes

Under the moon spinning on its lathe
The stone cries out

Spinning under the chisel carving ears,
The long hair winds

Of the echoes of cries of the bald white statues.
The still person who is solid shell

Like the sea of zero, whiter
For in the lathes of ice, the presence of salt.

Peter Redgrove

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Rose Tremain

The Stately Roller-Coaster

I ALWAYS SAY TO THE PRESS, if you want me to blab, send me a pretty woman. You'll do. How old are you? Twenty-eight? You're not more than thirty, are you? Got a family, have you? Figure like Eleanor Roosevelt when she was thirty. Nice breasts. But too tall. How tall are you? Five ten? If more women had good breasts, they wouldn't need brassières. Can't stand to see the things curdling round their waists! One in seventeen of you get breast cancer. Know that, did you? I read it somewhere. P'raps you wrote it in your newspaper. Did you? One in seventeen.

That's it. You sit there. Lady Bressingham used to like that chair. My wife. She used to perch there and pat the dogs. Potty about those dogs! Let them clamber all over her, kiss their faces. She preferred them to our daughter. Women! Mothers, the lot of you. But my wife wanted to be mother to the spaniels. Let them into her bed. Turfed me out. Shooed me out into the dressing-room and called to the dogs: Chuppy, Bimsie, Mac! Mac was short for Macassar. Lady Bressingham had an experience in Macassar, so she called the bloody dog after it.

Nice view from that chair. Think so? Used to be a bowl of flowers in front of the window, on that marquetry table. You could look out beyond the flowers if you wanted, or just look *at* the flowers. Lady Bressingham always looked *at* the flowers. Quite often she'd get up in the middle of a sentence and go and fiddle about with the flowers, rearranging them. But if I ever sit there, I look out of the window. See the cedars? Planted by Gordon of Khartoum when he stayed here. Odd fellow, Gordon, they say. Mad as a hatter! The East does that—and the heat. If Lady Bressingham had stayed in Macassar, she'd have gone potty. But the cedars are jolly good. I like them. That was where it was going to begin—just beyond the cedars, just far enough so you couldn't see it if you sat in that chair. Can't remember the layout exactly, but I know the fun-fair was going to start there. Want to see the plans? Got them somewhere. Somebody called Curry did them: landscape man. Said he was "in" with the County Council. Said there'd be no fiddle-faddle. Formality, he said, just a formality. But he was wrong. Had to go m'self, in the end, to see the Council people. Half of them women. First meeting we had I was told the toilet provision was inadequate.

Like a glass of sherry? Bloody cold, these winters. Told Mrs Baxter to light the fire early today, but she didn't. Chuck another log on, will you? Pull the chair nearer, if you like. Lovely smile, you've got. Always thought newspaper people were a humourless lot. Lovely smile and breasts. Tell at a glance you're a hit with the chaps. Children, have you? Husband? Did I ask you that? Can't remember a damn thing these days. Lucky man whoever he is. Sherry's behind you. Help yourself.

Tell you a bit about the place, shall I? Built in 1612. High Jacobean. Been in my family since 1789. Passed to the Bressinghams from the Villiers via the female line. Called Villiers Hall till 1901. Name changed by my father after the death of the Queen. Bressingham suits it better: stronger word. Lived here most of my life. Got to know it as a boy. Knew every inch of it then. Every bird's-nest. No wireless. No TV then. You made your own life up. We had cricket out there on the lawn. And a camp in the spinney. Made a tree house with my cousins we called The Flat.

Curry wanted to chop down part of the spinney, stick the aviary there. I said no. I said, put the aviary where Lady Bressingham's rose garden used to be and stick the bloody toilets behind it. Then you'd have had a walkway straight from the aviary to the fun-fair. It made sense. You can let a spinney go wild and it's still a spinney, but rose-gardens won't do unless they're tidy. Hate rose-gardens, anyway! Tea-roses! Disgusting fatty blobs. Don't like them, do you? Well, it's all overgrown anyway. Covered in convolvulus. Not worth saving. I'd have liked to hear parakeets there. Much better idea. So I convinced Curry. And I told poor old Flannery, my head gardener, just forget about Lady Bressingham's rose-garden, Flannery, let it go, let the weeds get it, because that's where the aviary's going to be. He's older than me, Flannery. Live long, the Irish, if they don't kill each other. But he's getting like the house now: corners falling off him!

Blabbing enough for you, am I? Saying the right things? Tell you the best thing I thought up with Curry—the Lion Pit! We were going to have lions anyway, but I said, why not a pit? Get a lion tamer—someone who'll make the brutes go docile—dress him in an anorak, give him a folding pushchair to hold, make him look like a one-parent family, then throw him in. Gladiator of the Week, we'd call it—every Sunday, sharp at three. Curry wasn't keen. Said we'd be contravening some Protection

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of the Public act, but I said, Curry, I know a good idea when I smell one. Take feeding-time at any zoo across the country; it's the danger element people are dribbling for: the man going into the cage with the raw meat. And the trick was, they wouldn't know he was a lion-tamer. I love tricks. They'd think the man was a social worker.

NEVER LIKED THE WINTER. Gets dark too early. Sherry keeps me going. Top me up, will you? Nice ankles you've got, too. Remind me a bit of Daphne. Got a son, have you? Daphne had a son. Can't remember the boy's name. Derek or Daren or something. Shouldn't be talking about any of that anyway. Often think Lady Bressingham's listening in from the Quinta San José—if she's still alive. We don't communicate, you see. She's there in the Quinta San José near Lisboa as she calls it. And I'm here. Dreadful name, Daphne. Don't you agree? Terribly common name. Daff, I called her. Make me a naughty boy, Daff! Lock the bloody door and get hold of me quickly! Sixty-two I was when Daphne came here, and randy as a trick cyclist. God, I was randy! Hadn't had sex for years with Lady Bressingham, but when Daff arrived I couldn't control myself. Like a sixteen-year-old, I was. Called it charvering when I was young. Odd bloody word for it. Day and night I'd dream of it—in my Bentley, down at the spinney, on the floor behind this bloody desk—charvering Daff. Don't print it, will you? Not meant to blab about any of that, but my God, it's lonely here.

That's why I was all for the fun-fair. And the lions, and the aviary. Bring a bit of life in. Friends of mine said, don't do it, old man. Ruin Bressingham, you will, destroy its character. But I said what the bloody good's character when the place is crumbling? I'll show you round when we've had the sherry. You can see for yourself what needs doing. Hasn't been touched, any of it, since Lady Bressingham left for Portugal. No money. Sold off a hundred acres to buy Lady Bressingham the Quinta San José. I heard she grows oranges. Mac must be dead by now. But I'd know if my wife was dead, I dare say. Some letter in Portugoose, wouldn't I? Have solicitors out there, don't they? Lady Bressingham's name was Fidelity Belcher, before I got her. I seem to choose women with disagreeable names.

Like it on your newspaper, do you? Interesting life? On the road a lot, chasing scandals and people with breast cancer? They loathe a scandal in these parts. Want life to run flat, like a motorway. But I don't agree. I've always liked ups and downs. Look like a stick-in-the-mud, I know that, but I was the one who brought up the Lion Pit. It's the Council who won't play. Curry said point nought nought fiddle-faddle, but what do we get in the end? Vetoes. You write that down, young woman. You put, "Lord Bressingham, 75, owner of Bressingham Hall, is being denied his chance to confront the world of today."

My daughter would have approved. I thought of writing to her, to get her to come and talk some sense into the County Council, but I don't know where she lives. The last I heard she was in Hackney. I grew up thinking all the poor of the nation lived in Hackney. Too bloody poor to breathe the sooty air! In the war, they sent evacuees out from Hackney, but we never took any in. Lady Bressingham disliked children. If they'd evacuated dogs, we'd have been overrun! We'd have had open house! Funny woman, Fidelity Belcher. Often hoped she'd tell me what happened in Macassar. Something damned odd. Something she never forgot. She's probably going round her orange trees in her sun-hat, this very afternoon, remembering Macassar. Imagine that! My daughter could be with her, but I doubt it. She didn't like us much, either one of us. Left us the minute she could. Lived with an Indian in Hackney. I said okay, good for you, no harm done, forgive and forget. I'm a tolerant man for a Peer. House of Lords is jam-packed with intolerant men, but I'm not among them. I said, bring Simon to Bressingham. He was called Simon, this Indian chap, not Vindaloo or Biriani, as you might expect. Simon. So I said, you bring him down and we'll kill the fatted calf! Forgot calves are sacred! Put my foot right in it there, eh? No harm intended. But she never forgave me. Worse than that, she tried to punish me.

Ever had children? Didn't ask you before, did I? Daff had a son. I wrote to Daff when this fun-fair scheme got going, took the liberty of reminding her of certain afternoons in my Bentley, asked her to come and see me and see Curry's plans. But I never heard a word. Shame, really. Beautiful buttocks, Daff had. Marvellous little fanny. Don't mind me talking like this, do you? Open-minded girl, are you? I'd have married Daff but for Lady Bressingham's Catholicism. Daphne was willing. I was a very potent man at sixty-two. She used to scream and tear at me. *Women!* My wife in bed with the dogs; Daff yelling her head off in the back of the Bentley! I thought my life had gone potty. No, I did. She was thirty-four. Not much older than you. Marriage hadn't worked. Left landed with her son. Came to me as a secretary. Had me going the minute I clapped eyes on her. I was well endowed then. I banged her all the time, better than an undergraduate. And she wanted me to marry her. She pleaded. So I thought, why not? What a wife to get at sixty-two! My God, I thought, my life's going to be a bloody miracle. So I went to Lady Bressingham. She was in bed with Bimsie and Mac, tickling their tummies. I sat on her bed and said, I'm in love with Daphne and Daphne's in love with me and I want a divorce. She was in her nightie. She said, pass me my bedjacket. So I gave her the bedjacket and she said, *never.*

There was a stink in the village, I can tell you. Lady Bressingham told them all—all the servants, all our friends, even the tradesmen and shopkeepers—my husband is unfaithful to me; my husband is betraying his name and mine. And poor Daff just couldn't take it. Those lovely screams of hers turned to hysteria. I did my level best to comfort her. I said, Daff, I may not be able to marry you, but I'll leave Bressingham and live with

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you in a flat. But no, she wanted marriage and that was that. She told me she was pregnant. What a to-do! Thought Bressingham would fall down round my ears! Never heard parakeets screech like Lady Bressingham screeched then. She began to break things, too. China ornaments. Vases. Hundreds of pounds she must have smashed. Terrifying! Then she went away. To Lisboa as she calls it.

JUST BY THE BY, THOUGH, all that. The filling in life's pie—the colourful part. Most people hide those bits. But I'm quite fond of colour. I said to Curry, if we've got to provide toilets, let's do them orange and red striped like circus tents, let's make a feature of them. And if we're going to have a fun-fair, let's for heaven's sake have a good one, with fast machinery and all the thrills. I think I overdid it. Got carried away. But don't tell me people wouldn't have liked it. And the Lion Pit. Cracking idea. Better than anything Bath has at Longleat. Outdo 'em all!

Lovely view from that chair, don't you think? Like it, do you? I agree. But if it all goes on crumbling and sinking, you won't be able to sit there any more. They'll have to pull the old house down. Stick me in some geriatric establishment. Breaks my heart. A flat with Daff I wouldn't have minded. Far from it. But I dislike institutions. People fart a lot in institutions. Top me up, will you? Plenty more sherry in the cellar. Never run short of that. Don't suppose you could track my daughter down, could you? Wrote to that Hackney address, but my letter came back. My daughter could have a go at the Council. She's a strong character. Told you she tried to punish me, did I? She wrote to Flannery and Mrs Baxter and all the staff, telling them what I should be paying them, telling them I was robbing them blind. Flannery showed me his letter. I was paying him half what my daughter told him he should be getting. So of course, he's never been happy since. I upped his wages a few pounds, but that didn't do. He threatened to leave. Leave, I told him. You leave, Flannery! You're too bloody old to work, anyway. But he never will. He eats practically free. He's got his cottage. He'll die there, or in the spinney poaching pheasants.

Wouldn't do that to your father, would you? Turn his own people against him? Dead is he? Oh. Expect I should be dead, by rights. That dog, Mac, must be dead by now. And those other fleabags, Chuppy and Whatsis-name. Only thing my wife could pronounce properly in Spanish as far as I know was Narcisco Yepes. Know him? *Narthithco Yepeth!* So how the hell does she manage in Portugoose? Eh? Just wanders about in her sun-hat, pointing, I dare say. *Watero las orangerias gracias. Portare immediatementi il breakfastino!* Beats me how you can make a life out of that twaddle! Perhaps she hasn't got a life. She never writes to me. I send her a Christmas card each year, for old times' sake. Sent her an out-of-date printed one last year by mistake: "With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year from Lord and Lady Bressingham", it said! My God, that will have made her break a few ornaments! Fidelity Belcher. I'll wonder to my dying day what happened to her in Macassar.

Show you round the house now, shall I? Got a scarf or something? Got any gloves? When I was a boy, there'd be twenty or thirty staying for Christmas. Everybody going in and out of each other's bedrooms in secret! We children used to spy on the night-flitters; called them The Somnambulists. Always had a fascination for sex, but Roman Catholics want to take all the fun out of it. Can't imagine why I married one. Didn't suit me at all. I should have had a string of young wives with tearing fingers, like Daff.

Oh, I like your scarf. I liked striped things. I told Curry, we're going to build a roller-coaster bigger than Battersea! Paint all the structure green, shape the little cars like wasps and bees, and let the people yell their heads off, flying above the cedars like insects. Imagine looking out of that window and seeing that—people whizzing over the trees! I'd have loved it. I'd have kept it going round the year. But I expect that's where I went wrong with the Council: too keen. Phlegmatic lot! Don't seem to care a jot that Bressingham's sinking into the moat. I told them, give me permission for the fun-fair and the Lion Pit and the aviary and I'll put Bressingham on its feet again within a year. I was only asking for *permission*. Not for money. But they refused me. Story of my life: people reaching for their bloody bedjackets and saying, never.

OFF WE GO, THEN. Always put a mackintosh on when I do the tour of the house; protects me from the damp. Dry rot, wet rot, mould, fungus—we've got it all here now. The Somnambulists would turn in their graves! There used to be fires in all the bedrooms and furs on the four-posters. The room Gordon allegedly slept in had a tiger skin as a hearthrug. Can't remember what we did with it. It got the moth, I wouldn't wonder. Or perhaps I sold it off when I bought Lady Bressingham the Quinta San José. I can't remember. Rooms are practically empty, though, now. Don't expect finery, will you? Just a lot of cold, empty rooms now. Nothing much to look at. Terrible legacy, a house like this in an age like this. Glad I haven't got a son to leave it to. Daff's pregnancy was phantom. Did I tell you that? Your gloves match that scarf. Very nice. You're a very bright, lovely woman. If I was younger, you wouldn't be safe with me. Dunno how that phantom got into Daff. Through the air-conditioning in the Bentley perhaps! Don't understand women. Never will now, will I? My daughter. Daff. My wife. All potty in one way or another. People are. That's why I wanted to give them a fun-fair—to let them have a good scream.

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Heinz R. Kuehn

Portrait of a Father

My father is buried under the stone floor of a little church in northern Germany, not far from that region of the Rhineland where he spent his childhood. The church is attached to a medieval castle (which is now a convent), and I like to think of this unusual tomb as a final, quiet statement about a man who, as an historian, had perceived the Middle Ages as the finest fruit of man's aspirations ennobled by faith, and who had succeeded in subordinating his restless nature to the spirit of that age. As to the outer course of his life, father had left me nothing that would help me to reconstruct anything resembling his biography. My memorabilia consist of some photographs; copies of two of the ten or twelve books he had written; a scrap of paper on which he had pencilled, "*In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas*"; and a letter to his third wife. But thanks to one of his cousins, who had been a tenor at the State Opera in Berlin, and whose extensive collection of family documents had by some accident ended up in my possession, I know a great deal about my paternal ancestors.

The Kühn family comes from the good soil of the Rhine country south of the Ruhr region, from that charming stretch of hulking hills and richly wooded valleys that to this day has remained untouched by the noise and dirt of Europe's most heavily industrialised area. In the picturesque villages and on the prosperous farms gracing the highlands of the "Bergisches Land" father's ancestors had been at home since at least the mid-17th century. On his mother's side, they had been "*omnes catholici et agricolae*"—Catholics and farmers all of them—as a birth certificate from 1816 comments, until her father, a quite prosperous brewmaster, broke with the farming tradition. On his father's side they had been Evangelical Reformed Protestants, members of that branch of Protestantism that was founded by John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli; and it was that confession which won out, at least temporarily, over the "*catholici*" when my father was baptised a Protestant. By trade they had been millers or bakers in Solingen on the Rhine, with the exception of my grandfather who had been a civil servant in that city and at one time was reputed to have been its mayor. A "Konditorei Kühn" still continued the family tradition in Solingen until at least ten years ago. I don't recall ever having met either of my paternal grandparents.

Richard, my father, was born in Solingen in 1886. His childhood seems to have been a happy one, characterised by the usual privileges and inordinate affections that quickly spoil an only boy growing up among three older sisters. His student years at the University of Giessen, where he studied history and German literature, were typical of the life led by young men of his class during the *belle époque*: drinking, fornicating, and duelling were as worthy of earnest pursuit as the ideals of truth, justice, and beauty. What were the crises of his adolescence? Did he have any? He once fought a duel because of a derogatory remark he had made about Bismarck, but an incident like this—and there were many of a similar kind—merely shows how deeply he and his fellow-students felt about the issues of the day. He liked to talk about the "wild student years", about impulsive week-end trips to Rome and Paris "with nothing but a toothbrush in my pocket", about "the girls we used to sleep with", about bloody brawls with young factory workers in the narrow, deserted alleys of the sleeping university town. But these were stories meant to entertain, reminiscences about a milieu and a mood he had obviously relished. About his inner world of those days he revealed nothing. Curiously, too, I have never heard him speak about his father, and when he talked about his mother, it had almost always something to do with her exceptional piety.

Father left the university without earning a degree. A few years before the First World War began he went to France "to do research on the French Revolution", a period in history that fascinated him all his life. In Paris he met and married Gisela Etzel, a German novelist of some repute in the literary circles of that time. The marriage ended with her death a year or two later. Father never spoke about Gisela. As a boy I had seen photos of her in my aunts' houses, and I was always struck by the infinite sadness that darkened her young and beautiful face like an impenetrable veil. One of her novels, *Ist das die Liebe?*

Heinz R. Kuehn *lives in the United States and works as editor-in-chief of the publications of the American College of Surgeons. He was born in Switzerland where his father had been in the diplomatic service. He was educated in Berlin and lived through the war and occupation years there, until his emigration in 1951. He is the author of a book on anti-Nazi martyrs in the Third Reich, an edition of Joseph de Maistre, and a biography of Mindszenty.*

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(*Is this what is called Love?*), was for a time on my mother's book-shelves. It was a tale of erotic adventures whose vivid description of sexual deviations fired my adolescent fantasies; but at the time I read it I was much too young to understand, let alone judge it. The book later disappeared from mother's shelves; I don't recall ever having seen a copy among my father's possessions. On the rare occasions when mother or my aunts mentioned Gisela, they never failed to remark, "She was the only woman your father truly loved. . . ." Was this remark meant to explain the failure of his subsequent marriages? Gisela's death may have left him with a wound that never healed completely, and it may explain why friendships with women were indispensable for him until he died. But I don't think that his happiness with Gisela became for him the ideal against which he measured the success of his subsequent marriages. Rather, I believe he was temperamentally destined for a life of solitude, and no marriage, no matter how successfully lived, would have touched the core of his being.

The result of father's studies in Paris was his translation of Jules Michelet's monumental *History of the French Revolution*. The eight magnificently bound and exquisitely illustrated volumes of the German edition accompanied me throughout my boyhood. I was fond of showing them to my friends—evidence that I not only did indeed have a father, but that he was also a scholar and famous. Then, like Gisela's book, these volumes, too, suddenly disappeared. The outbreak of the war of 1914–1918 put an end to the Parisian episode. My father served as a lieutenant in the infantry, was wounded at Verdun, spent many months in several field hospitals, recuperated in Switzerland, and finally, shortly before the end of the War, was assigned to the German Embassy in Berne as an aide to the attaché for cultural affairs. A young Jewish woman, Rosa Heymann, became his secretary. He married her in the spring of 1919; and I was born the following November. A year-and-a-half later, after the three of us had returned to Germany, my sister Annemarie was born in Mainz.

WHAT FORMED the substance of father's life during the two decades that lay between the end of one World War and the outbreak of another? Stephen Spender once wrote about the *entre-deux-guerres* generation

> *Who live under the shadow of a war,*
> *What can I do that matters?*

There were many things that mattered to father. Among the words I picked up as a child from his frequently vehement discussions with others were words like "separatists . . . French revenge . . . Dawes plan . . . Socialism . . . League of Nations . . . reparations", and others reflecting the tumult and the issues of the first decade of the Weimar Republic; but I was much too young to attach any meaning to them or to understand where he stood on the questions that moved the German intelligentsia of his day. I knew, however, where he stood on Adolf Hitler almost from the moment that name crept into the vocabulary of political discussion. I was about eight or nine when, during a stroll along Berlin's Unter den Linden, he spotted on an advertising pillar an election poster showing the moustached face of the *Führer*. Father stopped before the poster and, to give his words emphasis, lifted me up until I was face to face with Hitler's grim visage. "Remember this face", he said. "This man will some day destroy Germany." By the time I was old enough to discuss issues of public life, Germany's destruction had begun, and the things that had moved the minds of Germans during my childhood had lost their actuality.

I WOULD KNOW TODAY a great deal more about father's life and thoughts during those years if we had not had a violent argument one day in the summer of 1947. I have long forgotten what caused our quarrel, but immediately afterwards he dragged one of the two heavy, battered leather suitcases that were his constant companions out into the garden of the villa where we lived at the time, and set a match to the legacy of some fifty years of his life. From a window I watched how he took piece after piece—letters, clippings, photographs, manuscripts—glanced at each one briefly, and deliberately consigned it to the smouldering heap. After a while I went into the garden and stood silently beside him, but he ignored me. When the suitcase was empty, he watched the pitiable mound until the last shred of paper had turned to ashes. Then, without looking at me, he said, "This was meant for you. But you don't deserve to know anything about me."

IN 1925, when I was six and Annemarie four, my mother obtained a divorce, and the same year father married Edith Freudenheim, an actress. For the next thirteen years, until the Second World War broke out, I saw him only occasionally when he and Edith happened to live in Berlin. Sometimes my visits would last for a few hours, sometimes for a week-end. Edith would rarely join us. I was conscious of her presence, but after having said "Hello" when I arrived she would withdraw to her room and leave us to our game of cards or checkers. Even when I stayed with them for a few days she would never accompany us on our walks and only rarely take part in our meals. I can't recall either that Annemarie was ever present at those visits—it always seemed to be father and I. After father and Edith had stopped living together and he began to migrate from furnished room to furnished room, I saw him more frequently; and it seemed to me then that he had become freer, more open and more secure in his relationship to me, and that he was seeking my company rather than good-naturedly tolerating it.

The bits and pieces I remember from these visits have over the years grown together into the picture of a man who wanted to appear sufficient to himself but longed for acceptance, and who was locked into a solitude which, though freely chosen, often seemed more of a burden to him than a source of joy. The picture includes a small room filled with cigarette smoke, books on every surface that would support them, a sofa that could be converted into a bed, and a desk or writing table on which a neatly stacked pile of manuscripts, an elegant pocket watch of heavy silver, ashtray, blotter, and inkwell were always arranged in the same meticulous order. He was not a fluent or articulate talker, but his low, soft voice was pleasing. Impeccable in manners and immaculate in appearance, he had a

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natural charm of whose almost erotic quality I was already aware when I was still quite young. His movements were deliberate and had about them a reflective uncertainty—the hesitancy that characterised his speech seemed to transmit itself to the movements of his slender, almost effeminately elegant hands and his tall, angular frame. But whatever his words, his movements, his gestures were meant to convey, his inner self was most eloquently revealed in his face: in the wide mouth with its full, sensuous lips; the strong, fleshy nose; the high forehead with the sharp furrows between the brows, and, most strikingly, in the eyes that seemed forever held by something, somebody, unseen by the world around him. Even when he listened to me—and father was a superb listener—there was in his expression a last line of defence, a holding-back, as if he knew that his eyes could give away whatever secrets he wanted to protect, and that the veil he had drawn across these portals to his soul would tear at the slightest pressure. I always thought he would weep easily.

I HAVE NEVER known my father to be anything but a writer, although my parents' divorce papers list him as a "merchant." He may have done different things at different times when I was still a child, but in my memory he seemed forever to be filling page after page with his small, elegant, almost calligraphic script. Most of his literary production during the late 1920s and early '30s consisted, I believe, of book and theatre reviews, and of feature articles for liberal newspapers and magazines. Occasionally he referred to this period of his career as his "journalistic war years", and he used to tell me—with an air of smugness he rarely displayed—how the press of the Left and the press of the Right had closed ranks in denouncing him for his liberal humanism. Whenever the conversation, during the Hitler years, turned to the problems and eventual demise of the Weimar Republic, he heatedly insisted that the press on either side of the political spectrum had been in collusion against their one common and most dangerous enemy: the voice of reason and moderation.

After Hitler had come to power and had silenced the free press, my father turned to editing and translating, and to what he considered his true vocation: writing books. He talked with never-diminishing enthusiasm about plans for this or that book, about meetings with publishers, about how the book that was nearing completion would once and for all put an end to the confusion and uncertainty of our lives. But the books he did succeed in getting published brought him neither fame nor even temporary relief from money worries. "Your father didn't give me any money—ask him", was mother's refrain when I asked her for something other than a bare necessity. Most of the time, whatever money paid for his food and rent either came from Edith's wealthy parents or from one or another of his sisters. Whenever he did get paid for something he had written, translated, or edited he made good a debt or gave the money to mother.

It is quite possible that father wrote books that never came to my attention, but of those I know he wrote, only two reflect his abiding interest. They were not original works, but translations of Ernest Hello's *Physionomie de Saints* and *L'Homme*. Hello (1828–1885) was a French critic and lay theologian who in his books and philosophical and critical essays revealed and castigated the intellectual dishonesty and shallowness of 19th-century rationalism and positivism, and whose critical essays on Victor Hugo and Shakespeare have a permanent place among this genre of literature. But Hello was above all a mystic for whom all problems of man and society converged in what he called "the problem of adoration." In Hello father found the articulation of what he knew to be the driving force in his own life, and it was probably the work of Hello that gave him the decisive intellectual impetus to convert to Catholicism.

"THE PROBLEM OF ADORATION" is, in fact, the central theme of all of father's favourite authors, no matter how sharply they differed among each other on specific religious, social, or political issues.

Besides Hello, the three writers I remember best from our conversations are Görres, Brentano, and de Maistre. Joseph von Görres, the most influential German writer and political publicist of the Napoleonic era, was Catholic, liberal, passionately anti-Prussian, and cosmopolitan. On the other hand, Clemens Brentano, the novelist and poet who wrote some of the finest lyrics of the period of German Romanticism, was a convert to Catholicism, a sentimentalist in his personal conduct, and politically naive. Joseph de Maistre, their French contemporary, was a traditionalist historian and philosopher, a political polemicist, and ultra-conservative in his religious views. But all three of them had the talent, the gift of mysticism: to see in a personal God the source, the unifying and vivifying principle, and the fulfilment of everything that is. More importantly, for these writers God had irrevocably become a participant in the bloody, violent history of His creatures, and it was for them unthinkable to speak about social, cultural, or political reforms without speaking in the same breath about God. Their vision spoke powerfully to my father's instinct as an historian.

Long before he became a Christian that same vision may have drawn him to Michelet. As an historian, Michelet is notoriously unreliable, but his visionary qualities, his deep insights into the creative forces of history, his perception of the demonic and the divine in the life of nations make him the most stimulating writer in his field. Michelet remained one of the favourite guests in father's intellectual household; as did, for example, Heinrich Heine whom he considered an Israelite of the Old Covenant at heart; or Nietzsche, who strongly influenced him in his youth and whose unredeemed mysticism he took seriously. But he scorned (a contempt that had caused him great difficulties already in his student years) most of the textbook heroes of German literature and history: Goethe, Richard Wagner, Frederick the Great, Bismarck, Rilke. "They are Teutons", he used to say, "they brood too much." Had he not found his way to Christianity, I suspect he would have chosen Heine as his literary patron saint.

Father was as reticent about the books he had written as about anything else in his personal life, and he was particularly nonchalant about those he wrote because his publisher thought they had a ready market. *Letters of Court Ladies* was one of them. It was a collection of personal letters written by young

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noblewomen serving at the Imperial court of the Hohenzollerns during the Bismarck era. Another of his books I discovered accidentally early during the War when he asked me one day to work for a few week-ends in his publisher's bindery which was then short of help. The book being bound was titled *Woman Among Civilised Nations*—a large, expensive-looking volume lavishly illustrated with gravures of nudes. When I walked into the small shop I was embarrassed at seeing it littered with stacks of these illustrations, but my embarrassment turned to shame and something amounting to helpless anger when I discovered my father's name on the cover. I didn't mention the incident to him, or question him about the book. He never told me he had written such a book, and I never saw a copy in his library.

Besides the two translations of Hello, there was only one other of his books of which he always kept a copy among his possessions. This was a biography of Greta Garbo. The book was the result of his brief affiliation during the late '30s with the UFA (*Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft*) for which he read French novels and plays to extract from them story material for motion-pictures. None of his ideas was ever turned into a film, but having access to the archives of Europe's largest film studio, he used the opportunity to write the story of a woman whom he admired, not because she was a great actress (he didn't think she was), but because he saw in her one of those rare actresses who are persuasive and arresting because they remain true to their soul in every role they play. *Woman Among Civilised Nations* had exploited my father's talent and poverty for the publisher's gain, and I am certain my father disavowed the book the moment he turned in the manuscript. *Greta Garbo: the Life of a Woman and Artist* he had enjoyed writing. It bore the dedication "For Mrs Edith Kühn", although when it was published in 1941, Edith, the actress he had married, had already left Germany and their separation had become permanent.

Edith once told me that father was still an agnostic when he married her; he was then forty years old. What had drawn him to Christianity, and why did he convert to Catholicism? I know how strongly his conversion was motivated by his favourite writers, but, perhaps because of his mother's influence, Roman Catholicism must always have had an attraction for him. At his insistence, Annemarie and I had been baptised as Catholics.

"If the children are to be baptised at all", he had said, according to my mother, "I want them to be Catholics. No other religion makes sense."

Mother was indifferent to religion, and we grew up as Protestants simply by virtue of having to attend the compulsory religious instruction of the Protestant schools to which mother sent us. But it was father who first exposed me, when I was still quite small, to the romance and grandeur of Roman Catholicism. Whenever I stayed in the homes of his sisters in Cologne or Mainz, and he happened to visit there, we spent hours walking through the cathedral and medieval churches of these cities, and we sometimes took long excursions along the Rhine for the sole purpose of visiting a church of which he was particularly fond. He knew the story of every stained-glass window, statue, tomb, patron saint, and although his rapid and enthusiastic recital of names and dates and events often confused and tired me, I perfectly understood, as young as I was, that he talked with the tongue of an adorer, not with the tongue of an historian. Father's excited whisper; the cool, dark solemnity of these sacred vaults; the embarrassingly irreverent echo of my hobnailed boots; the mysterious glow of soaring windows, and the wintry smell of granite tombs—these impressions are as indelibly a part of my father's picture as are his desk, his books, his cigarettes, and his tattered suitcases.

I WAS ABOUT fourteen when, one Sunday morning, he asked me to accompany him to mass. Afterwards, at breakfast, he simply asked, "Did you like it?" I said I had. It had been my first attendance at mass, and his invitation had come without forewarning, but the experience, far from taking me off guard, had touched me like something I had expected for a long time, had, indeed, waited for as one waits for the final explanation, the final clarification in a leisurely conversation. A year later, I was conditionally baptised and received into the Church.

If my father's decision to take up the burden of that gospel whose manifestations in history he had for so long admired and loved, gave him a share of that peace which the world cannot give, that same decision had harsh consequences for my mother, and for Edith.

I remember a large, gloomy room whose wooden floor was bare and highly polished. On one wall hung a tall white crucifix. Father, mother, Annemarie, and I were sitting on chairs, far apart from each other. An old man (whom I didn't recognise as a priest then) with a mane of white hair faced us across a fortress-like desk that seemed to occupy half of the room. Mother was crying. I cannot date the incident, and at the time it happened I was still too young to understand that it had to do with the dissolution of my parents' marriage by virtue of the Pauline Privilege, which, under certain conditions, makes it possible for converts to remarry while the former partner is still living. Whatever was on that day set in order in the eyes of my father and the Church, it caused only profound misery for both women. For my mother, it destroyed any hope that father would one day return to her and his children. That hope, no matter how spitefully, how bitterly she used to speak to us about him, had never left her. It had been so strong that, when he had become a Catholic, she herself had converted to Catholicism to clear the way for a reconciliation. When she fled Germany shortly before the War broke out, to escape deportation to a concentration cap, she left with her dream of a reunion shattered and despairing of God's mercy and the Church's justice.

FOR EDITH, TOO, father's conversion set an end to her hopes for a stable, permanent union. After the Church had sanctioned my parents' civil divorce, father could have had his marriage to Edith sacramentally validated by a remarriage in the Church. Yet he never took this step. Instead, they separated, although they continued to see each other frequently, and periodically even lived under the same roof, until Edith finally emigrated to Switzerland in 1940. Whatever treasure father had found by becoming a Christian had remained hidden from the women

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who loved him. They experienced only the sword of the Kingdom.

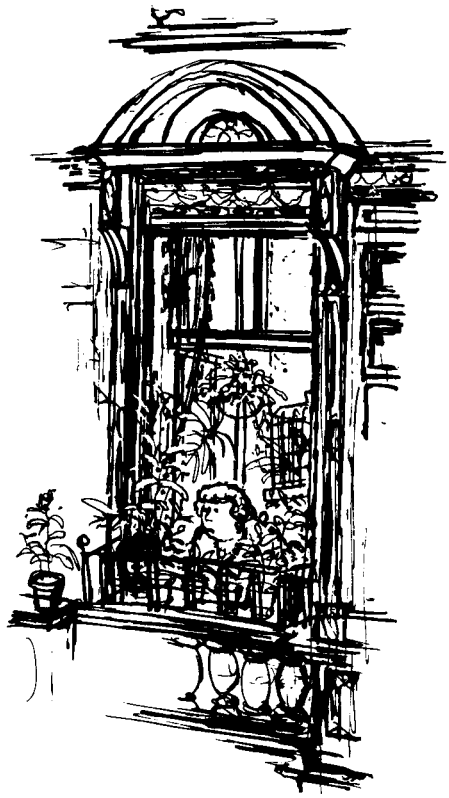
UNTIL I was twenty, father had been for me simply "*Vater*"—Dad—a person I loved and respected, whose presence I sought, but whom I did not expect to give stability or direction to my life because I sensed, I knew, that his own was deeply troubled. For two decades our paths occasionally crossed; at each crossing he left an indelible mark on my life, but I neither could nor wanted to follow him, or, indeed, knew where he had come from or where he was headed. A man with a feeling of guilt toward his child and a child with divided loyalties do not make good travelling companions.

During the winter of 1939–1940 our relationship changed perceptibly. At the time I worked as a stage hand at an operetta theatre in Berlin, and after the evening performance and on week-ends I used to take the subway for a short ride to the fashionable suburb of Zehlendorf where Edith then owned a small villa. It had been a farewell gift from her wealthy parents who, because her father was a Jew, had fled Germany shortly after Hitler had assumed power. As small as it was, the villa was an expensive gift, furnished with exquisite taste. Edith knew how to place an authentic armchair of the Renaissance next to a superb replica of a Louis XVI writing-table, and how to juxtapose, on a wall covered with pale-yellow silk, an ornately framed copy of Rembrandt's *Man in a Gilt Helmet* with a delicate water-colour by Matisse. Whatever else had gradually driven a wedge between her and father, it certainly was not incompatibility in refined taste or in appreciation of discreet luxury. No matter how resolutely father eventually turned his back on *vanitas mundi*, he never ceased to savour that *vanitas* as long as it presented itself in meticulous style.

I came to know the villa at Edithstrasse 1A well. I had visited there frequently when it was still a home for father and Edith, and I continued to visit it after their separation, when father himself had become a visitor. Father loved the place, and he never fully accepted the fact that it ultimately came to symbolise the defeat of his last attempt to live his life as a husband and father. For this lovely gift, which Edith's parents had hoped would bring happiness and stability to their daughter's marriage, may well have been one of the reasons for its dissolution. Father had never thought of the villa as a nest for himself and Edith, but from the moment it was given to them had tried to persuade Edith to make it a home for my sister and me as well. Mother's emigration seemed to have removed the last obstacle to his plan, but Edith continued to refuse. Had she yielded, I am certain he would have married her before the Church, and the lives of all of us would have taken a profoundly different turn.

Even though father's dream remained unfulfilled, during the first winter of the War the villa became for him and me a place that encouraged intimacy. If words such as light, warmth, intimacy, and closeness are at all evocative of the concept of "home", the villa then was home in a sense in which no other place had ever been home for me. Father and I each had our own furnished room elsewhere—he at a friend's apartment, I near the theatre—but it was the small island of warmth and light where we seemed to belong. Edith detested darkness, and a gloomy day was sufficient to make her turn on the lights in every room, from basement to attic. And craving warmth as much as light, she squandered coal and electricity in vengeful defiance of the restrictions imposed by the régime. But as much as I enjoyed escaping from my cold and dreary room to a comfortable and charming refuge, it was above all else father's company that drew me to the villa; and I sensed that he desired my company as much as I did his. For the first time in our relationship I met him on his own ground and, as it were, on my own terms. I had grown up; I was on my own; I could measure his advice against my own experiences and needs, and because of the precariousness of the time and the uncertainty of my fate as a half-Jew under the Hitler régime, was as adrift and footloose as he himself had been for most of his life. Children commonly "discover" their parents only after the children have left the nest and have begun to take their life into their own hands. I discovered my father in that elegant, secluded villa which, for a brief moment, held all the promises of a home.

THE CATALYST of that experience was father's old friend, the writer Hanns Heinz Ewers whom he had met when they both lived in Paris (and who, I believe, had introduced him to Gisela Etzel). Although father had sometimes talked about him when I was still small, I had never met him until that winter and I would not see him again afterwards. He was a novelist whose mind dwelt in the murky regions of life. Some of his books, with titles such as *The Vampire, The Horror,* and *The Possessed,* enjoyed an enormous popularity



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and had been republished for decades. A couple of years after Hitler had come to power, Ewers had written a biography of Horst Wessel, a young storm-trooper who had been murdered by hoodlums ("Communists" was the official version) and who had composed the lyrics for what after his death became the official marching-song of the Nazi party and, after 1933, the second national anthem. Ewers' book—a superficial thriller, like most of his novels—was vigorously promoted by the Ministry of Propaganda, and because it was incomparably more palatable than the dross put out by that ministry, soon became better known than even Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

At that stage of his fame—or notoriety—I finally met the man of whom father had once told me that he knew how to deal with the devil but was unable to enter a butcher-shop because he became ill from the sight of blood and raw meat. From the moment we first shook hands I took a dislike to him. I was also wary of him because of his popularity with the Nazis, but I am sure he would never have entered Edith's house had he been as much as a sympathiser with the régime. Father's attitude toward him reflected a faint irony and sometimes even sarcasm, but no hostility. He seemed to respect Ewers' aggressive atheism and tolerate his intellectual opportunism; it had not been too long since he himself had wrestled with these demons.

I usually arrived at the villa when my three companions were already far along in whatever happened to engage them that night. Sometimes, as if they had waited for my arrival, they immediately drew me into their conversation; but mostly I sat quietly in a comfortable *chaise-longue* and, sipping a glass of wine, listened to their play of words and wits—just as I had sat, an hour ago, in my backstage cubicle, entranced by the melodies of *Die Fledermaus*. Edith, father, and Ewers were at ease with one another. Each knew the other intimately, and their closeness was such that a single word, a glance, a gesture revealed as much as a spirited discourse. Edith's warmth, spontaneity, and considerable erotic charm kept the evening from becoming heavy by the sheer weight of masculine sobriety. If she was unhappy about her separation from father, she knew how to disguise her feelings with the skill and discipline of the true actress. Father, sitting in his favourite chair whose upholstered arm-rests ended in lion-heads finely carved in ebony wood, was relaxed and in high spirits.

But it was Ewers' bulky, impeccably tailored presence that conjured up the spirit of the evening. He personified for me father's past, a time that lay before father's purification and conversion and that, for want of recollections of my own, I associated with the milieu Gisela had described in her novel, *Is this what is called Love?* I immediately thought of that book, which had disturbed me so deeply as a child, the first time I looked into Ewers' narrowly set, pale-blue eyes and recognised in this man, in his icy look, all the unlovely features that still, from time to time, broke through father's words and actions: a violent temper; an unbridled sensuality; cynicism; and a slick, contemptuous politeness. Father, I knew, had long detached himself from that world in which he had been at home in Paris, when Gisela had been his wife and Ewers his friend. But now, observing him in the company of his old friend, animated by wine and spirited talk, I recognised for the first time how radically that world had once been part of his nature: the world of the flesh (as the Hebrew saints would have put it) or, as father himself would have said, "the world of André Gide and of the early Baudelaire." I saw my father as he had been before I knew him, as mother knew him when she married him, as Edith knew him when she fell in love with him. I saw the man who was at home among the crystal chandeliers, the silken wallpaper, the Persian rugs, the nymphs and fauns.

But I saw something else besides. Ewers and Edith were wholly themselves. Ewers radiated the spirit of his books, a spirit not so much of evil as of a cynical disdain for everything that is good, honourable, and beautiful. Edith, hanging on his lips as he dazzled us with tales of famous and infamous people he had known, was completely under his spell, while he made no effort to hide his delight in the attention of this charming woman. Father, as obviously as he enjoyed the magic of the hour, held back. He did not challenge his old friend who sometimes ridiculed, sometimes attacked the very things by which my father lived. Father kept a distance which showed itself more in a glance, a gesture, a smile, a silence than in anything he said. I saw the man I had not known, but I also saw the man I knew: I saw the threshold of his soul, a threshold over which mother and Edith, or for that matter, Ewers, had never stepped because they were deaf to the language of faith. And I sensed the distance he had travelled in his search for, and finally his fidelity to, a truth whose essence, for him, was surrender—surrender into the hands of God. I cannot describe the experience any better. The exchange that took place between father and me that winter, in that villa, remained unspoken, unarticulated, and, ultimately, mysterious. What matters is that, when winter had turned into spring, I had learned to understand and accept the man whose own struggle had tragically shattered the lives of the two women who had never ceased to love him.

In about mid-1939 my father began to spend most of his week-ends at a small Benedictine convent in the country some 25 miles south of Berlin. Occasionally he lived there for a week at a time, to complete a manuscript or read the galleys for a book. Finally, in the spring of 1940, he took up residence with the sisters. The Priory of St Gertrud (or "Alexanderdorf" as we called it, after the name of the hamlet that identified the postal address) represented a unique experiment in modern monasticism in that the sisters attempted to live the classic Benedictine ideal of *Ora et Labora* without the division between "sisters" and "choir sisters." All of the twenty or so nuns took care of the grounds and buildings of what once had been an imposing Junker estate, and all of them participated in the celebration of the liturgical hours.

What the priory offered to my father was, foremost, a *routine*—an ordered, disciplined regularity of tasks, a framework for time, and a purpose for every hour, every day, and every week. To him, I am sure, submission to this routine was liberation from a lifelong struggle to order his life toward a purpose that for most other men consisted of caring for a family or of serving a profession. At fifty-five he submerged himself in the monastic routine with a fervour that would have suited a novice still aglow with the certainty of having been called. But unlike many a novice, he remained completely believable. A

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mystic all his life, he now surrendered his thoughts, his feelings, and his time to the norms and dictates of an exacting style of adoration that freed him from the uncertainties and dangers of a hermit's piety. For the rest, nobody would have noticed any change in him, and even those of his relatives and friends who themselves were non-believers but had long accepted his "Catholic bias" saw nothing particularly eccentric in his finally chosing a convent as his living quarters.

His social life was busier than ever. In those years, liturgical renewal was in the air in Germany, and the priory had quickly become known as a place where liturgical piety had been restored to its classic monastic forms, and where it was lived with the simplicity and discipline that had characterised the life of the earliest Benedictine foundations. On any given Sunday or holiday, the small convent chapel was crowded with worshippers from Berlin, and the few guest-rooms in the priory were always occupied by visitors who had come from farther away to spend a few weeks or the months of their summer vacation with the community. Guests were not pampered in Alexanderdorf. The sisters provided the meals in a common guest dining-room, but for the rest went about their chores. Neither they nor the two monks assigned to the priory as chaplains went out of their way to counsel or entertain visitors; their counsel was the life they led, a life intolerant of distractions. But my father was available; after all, he had no valid excuse for dissociating himself from the visitors. For many of them, a visit with Herr Kühn soon became one of the attractions that drew them to the priory, and on week-ends his modest room, as he good-naturedly complained, bore more resemblance to a pigeon-loft than to a monastic hideaway.

Unfailingly, there were women friends. Among the nuns, Sister Eucharis, a young woman who had made her vows only a few months before father began to live at the priory, and who, as sister in charge of the guests, was less restricted in her freedom of movement and communication than the rest of the community, became his constant, closest companion. Their friendship, embedded, as it were, in the salutary strictness of the religious life, and quietly supported by her superiors and co-religious, was real and intimate, and it lasted until father died in 1961.

Father's friendship with Ida Marie Soltmann, one of the regular guests, is more difficult to fathom than his friendship with Sister Eucharis, his *fille d'alliance*. I don't believe father ever considered marrying Ida Marie (this would have required divorcing Edith), although *Frau Doktor* (as we called her) seems to have been less certain of his feelings toward her and occasionally protested with mock horror that she had no intention of becoming "Mrs Kühn number four." Yet to this day I believe that of all the women who had played a role in father's life, she was the only one with whom he would have had a good marriage. Attractive, witty, and erudite, she was of father's age and, like him, a convert to Catholicism and a fervent Francophile, and she shared with him his love for the Church and the Benedictine style of piety, his interest in history, and his consuming passion for books. Besides, she was level-headed and had made a name for herself as director of a vocational school for run-away girls. Like father, she became a counsellor and quasi-confessor to the nuns: and during the long summer vacations, which she regularly spent at the priory, her room too was turned into a pigeon-loft by visitors who sought her advice and help.

After the War, when the younger nuns had established a new foundation in the castle that was to become father's last hermitage, and her two room-mates had died in short succession, she made her home in the new convent. Father had moved there earlier, and for a few years the two friends were able to share not only their interests and their books, their meals and their chapel visits, and their after-dinner walks, but also a refuge whose very walls embodied the spirit of their affection for each other. Ida Marie survived father. When I last saw her, she had become senile and I recognised her only by the large, grey, mocking eyes which appraised me, now a stranger, out of the sockets of a skull framed by strands of thin white hair. On her bed, next to which she sat in a wicker chair, lay a book, turned over on its opened pages: André Maurois' *A la recherche de Marcel Proust.*

For my father, the first three years of the War were among the happiest of his life. His days were filled with praying, studying, and writing, and with taking long walks through the heathlands and pine forests surrounding the priory. His genuine affection for simple people made him popular among the farmers and villagers of the vicinity. His friends looked up to him as the example of one who had successfully reconciled in his mode of life the impulses toward a monastic piety with the cultivation of a refined yet unmistakably worldly humanism. He was at home, he belonged, and, perhaps most importantly, for the first time in his life he was free of financial worries. The sisters may or may not have accepted in good faith his usual optimistic predictions that a windfall from the sale of this or that manuscript would soon enable him to pay for his room and board; but as far as I know they never pressed the issue. Instead, they took his pledge that they would receive, after his death, his magnificent stamp collection—the result of a consuming hobby he had pursued since boyhood. For the first time in his life, too, he was free of the continuous demands on his time and money by those for whom he felt himself responsible, if not before the world, then certainly and deeply before God. Edith was in Switzerland and about to emigrate to the United States; my mother was in London; and Annemarie and I lived and worked in Berlin. Even his considerable need for cigarettes was taken care of: when the rationing of tobacco began, Ida Marie and others supplied him so generously with coupons that he could satisfy his three-packs-a-day habit until tobacco became altogether unavailable.

The idyll ended abruptly in the autumn of 1943. Until then the War, which had already for two years enveloped the city to the north with anxiety at day and terror at night, had made no appreciable impact on life at the priory. But that fall British bombers began to intensify their night raids on Berlin: and as the German defence stiffened in response, the air battles were increasingly fought in the approach corridors to the city. For the first time, exploding bombs—dropped by planes that had been routed and wanted to lighten their load for the return flight—shook the grounds of the priory. Now the grim reality of the War came home to father, and it made him tremble. As long as the raids and air battles had been confined to the city, he

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had managed to keep up an attitude about the War that was almost offensively blasé: for him Germany had lost the War from the day it began, and, as he frequently protested, he was above paying any attention to Germany's death-throes. Sometimes, when we stood at the edge of the priory's park and watched the awesome spectacle of a night raid unfold over the northern horizon, he would, oblivious of me and the other guests, whistle to himself the tune of *God Save the King*. Now he no longer whistled. The death-throes had seized that tiny portion of the German colossus where he had hoped to ride out the catastrophe in equanimity, and he was afraid.

IN THE SPRING of 1944, I managed to leave Berlin and move into the priory. The sisters gave me a room in one of the barns, and I found a job at a saw-mill in a neighbouring village. Under less arduous conditions, this could have been a splendid time for father and me. For years we had felt the unspoken need for *time*—time to get to know each other and to profit from each other, time simply to get used to one another as equals in temperament, interests, and natural talents. We had always *visited*, and the few hours or days we spent together had been overshadowed by the "good-bye" we knew would all too quickly follow the "Hello, how have you been? . . ." Now we had time, but it turned against us like a dagger suspended over our throats. Alexanderdorf lay on the route the Russians planned to use for their attack on Berlin, and bombs now began to fall day and night in the vicinity of the priory as the Allied planes prepared that route for the Russian advance. The guests ceased coming. Instead, the priory, which remained intact to the end, opened its doors to the *Bombenflüchtlinge* (bombed-out refugees) from Berlin, mostly young women with small children, among them my sister with her infant daughter. Then came the refugees from the east, fleeing before the advancing Russian troops: and by January 1945 the priory resembled a camp under siege. In March, on a still night, the rumble of Russian cannons could be heard, and the reflections from their fire lit up the clouds on the eastern horizon like continuous lightning. Then, for a few hellish days, the grey waves of battle washed over the priory, until, on a fine spring morning in April, the first Russian tank rolled through its gate.

Throughout these last months of the War, throughout these days and nights of chaos, violence, and death that forged nuns, guests, and refugees into a community whose sole aim was to survive from hour to hour, father kept to his room—writing. At moments, I hated him for his seeming callousness and indifference: but today I know that this was the only way in which *he* could survive. He could not have tended to the wounded and dying in the barns; he could not have kept vigil with the women, to help protect them against assault from Russian and German soldiers, or from plundering refugees. He seemed impervious to Annemarie's grieving for her husband, whom she believed dead or imprisoned in Russia. His fear—which was the terror of the body in the face of annihilation, a terror that made his hands tremble as he wrote—became bearable and found relief through the only discipline he knew: the discipline of writing. More importantly, I believe that in his writing during these months he realised—made concrete and specific—his hope for the kind of Germany, indeed for the kind of Europe, he expected to emerge from the ruins of war.

For him, the War had been the radical purge that had to precede the restoration of Europe on the foundation of a Christian humanism. He fervently believed in that restoration; it was the only thing that mattered about the War. Of course, like everyone of us, he was singularly prepared to die in the holocaust that laid waste the Europe he had known, but in him the fear of death was so much more poignant because, unlike most of us, he had a deep and unshakable faith in Germany's survival and Europe's transformation. The manuscript on which he was working when the first Russian soldier entered his room contained his labour on a condensation and revision of the *History of the Religion of Jesus Christ*, a 15-volume work by Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg, one of the many prominent German poets and historians of the Romantic era who had converted to Catholicism. It was the kind of book, father believed, that was needed for an intellectual re-orientation of the Germans, and that people, starved for truth and spiritual direction after twelve years of Nazi oppression, would turn to after the War. He finished the manuscript—nearly one thousand handwritten pages—in the summer of 1945; but it never found a publisher.

I RETURNED TO Berlin as soon as the fighting in the city had ceased, and began to work on my first book, a study of the role of angels in the thought and life of Western man. When I had told father, a few days before my departure from the priory, that I had decided to become a writer, he had reflected for a few moments and said, "Yes, I think you can do it. You have talent and, more importantly, you think clearly. If you can learn how to live with loneliness and insecurity, you may make a good writer. . . ." He had asked me if I knew what I was going to write about, and when I said I hadn't made up my mind, he suggested a book on the angels.

"It will fill a gap in contemporary religious literature", he said. "Besides, we have been experiencing demons for the past twenty years, and that should have prepared us to take angels seriously." The book was published in 1947 and was a success. It was favourably reviewed in scholarly and popular journals, and as a result I was able to secure contracts for several other books and for free-lance assignments. Curiously, father remained non-committal about my achievement. To this day, I don't know what he thought about the book on the angels, or about the two other books I wrote before I emigrated to America. I was too proud to ask him outright, and he never volunteered an appraisal. He did, however, continue to suggest to me subjects for other books, subjects whose choice was consistent with his belief in the need for a radical intellectual and spiritual conversion of Germany. One of his suggestions was that I translate—and accompany with an extensive introduction and commentary—Joseph de Maistre's *Les Soirées de St Petersbourg*, the French polemicist's acrimonious but brilliant defence of Christian virtue as the foundation of order and happiness in society. Since father had found a publisher who offered me a contract for the book, I accepted his suggestion. I finished the manuscript in the spring of 1948: but while I was working on the page-proofs the publisher went

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bankrupt in the wake of a currency reform, and the book was never printed.

THAT SAME YEAR I married. Regina and I moved into the villa which had once belonged to Edith and had survived the bombings with only a blown-off roof, blown-out windows, and cracked ceilings and walls, but almost all of its exquisite furnishings had been removed by its successive Russian and American occupants. Father decided to live with us. Alexanderdorf now belonged to the Soviet Russian zone, and he had become increasingly discouraged and depressed by the harassment of the priory by German Communists and Russian authorities. He moved into his old room, a small studio on the second floor, where he kept to himself among his books, his stamp collection, and a newly acquired collection of pipes. What was now conspicuously missing from his environment was the perennial neat pile of manuscripts on his desk. Although he still talked at times with his former zest about plans for a book that absolutely needed writing, he confined himself to writing an occasional book review or to editing manuscripts that others had submitted to his publisher. When Regina and I moved into an apartment of our own, he remained in the house for a few more months, but the daily grim struggle for subsistence soon wearied him, and at the end of 1949 he returned to the priory.

IN THE SUMMER of 1950 I visited the United States under the auspices of a cultural-exchange programme and on my return to Berlin applied for immigration to the USA without being certain that, if the visa were granted, I would accept the risks of such a radical venture. Surprisingly, father urged me to grasp at the opportunity. We were again on the familiar visiting status, and since it had become too hazardous for me to travel into the Soviet zone, he came occasionally to West Berlin to visit us and to supply himself with books and with cigarettes we had bought for him on the black market. To my argument that I would be breaking off a promising career as a writer, he replied, "You are young enough and talented enough to find a new home—an intellectual, a spiritual home—in another country. You may even learn to be a writer again, in another language, but writing isn't really all that important. There's no future for you here or in West Germany. . . . " When I asked him how such a dim view was compatible with his high expectations of Germany's renewal, he shrugged: "Look, the War has been over for nearly six years. I see no signs that we have learned anything. Worse, Europe is exhausted. We are thought-out, written-out, felt-out. . . . Why do you think I have been interested in republishing the old masters—Hello, Bremond, Stolberg, de Maistre? They still carried the idea of a Christian Europe in their blood—not only on their lips—and they wrote with strength and clarity about their vision. We have nothing to add to what they have felt and said. . . . No, the push for renewal will come from America. It's a young country and perhaps, to us, a savage country, but it has the savageness of innocence, not the savageness of corruption."

This was our last conversation. On a bleak November day in 1951 my father came to Berlin to say farewell to Regina and me, and to his two infant granddaughters. Over coffee and cake we talked about the arrangements for our trip and other trivial matters, careful to keep the conversation light and easy-going. I accompanied him to the city railway station and, on an impulse, offered to ride with him to the last station within the boundaries of the Western sectors. The train was packed to suffocation, and for twenty minutes we stood chest to chest, chin to chin, trying to avoid one another's eyes. We did not speak. When my station came, I quickly pressed both of his hands and fought my way to the exit. He followed me, stopping just short of the door. When I had gained the platform I turned, and for a brief moment I saw nothing but his eyes. Glistening with tears, they seemed like a luminous abyss drawing me into a vortex of unspeakable suffering. Now the curtain, which all his life had veiled the gateway to his innermost self, was open, and his soul lay bare, at the mercy of my love. Then a burly man, impatient to reach the exit and finding his way blocked by father, shoved him aside. Father stumbled, and as the door closed and the train began to move, I saw him fall. Instinctively I stretched out a hand to support him. The train pulled out and I stood, hand outstretched, motionless, dry-eyed, until the red tail-lights had disappeared in the darkness of a driving rain.

THE CASTLE where father spent the last years of his life is tucked away in a dense forest in the marshy north-west corner of Germany, not far from where Lower Saxony borders on Holland. "Castle Dinklage", whose history goes back to the time of the robber-barons who infested this nearly inaccessible region in the 10th century, had been given to the nuns of St Gertrud by the von Galen family, one of whose members was Count Clemens-August Cardinal von Galen, the Bishop of Münster who became famous during the Nazi era for his scathing attacks on the racial doctrines of the Third Reich. The family had admired the work the sisters had done in Alexanderdorf to revive the life and spirit of Benedictine monasticism, and in offering them its ancestral seat, the family hoped that the castle would become a centre of liturgical renewal for West Germany. Today the castle, which the sisters named St Scholastika Convent, consists of four two-storey, half-timbered stone buildings erected in the 14th century on the foundations of the old robbers' den. Surrounded by a moat, they form a compact quadrangle around a cobble-stoned inner court which is accessible only by way of a single drawbridge. Outside the moat, on the edge of the woods, stands a small church whose neo-Gothic ugliness disturbs the serenity of the forest and the elegant simplicity of the castle buildings. The church was built in the 18th century to serve as the crypt for the Galen family: and in 1961 father was buried under its granite floor, the only commoner among noblemen and noblewomen.

I visited the castle in 1972, on my first visit to the country I had left 21 years earlier. Father had written to me only once after our separation, and Sister Eucharis, whose own brief reports had been constrained as much by her natural shyness as by the dictates of monastic discipline, told me how he had spent his last ten years. When, early in 1952, the sisters who had been assigned to the new foundation were ready to leave the Soviet zone, the prioress had urged him to join them, but he had

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refused. Alexanderdorf was his home, he had declared; besides, he wanted to finish a manuscript that required his presence in the Russian-occupied territory.

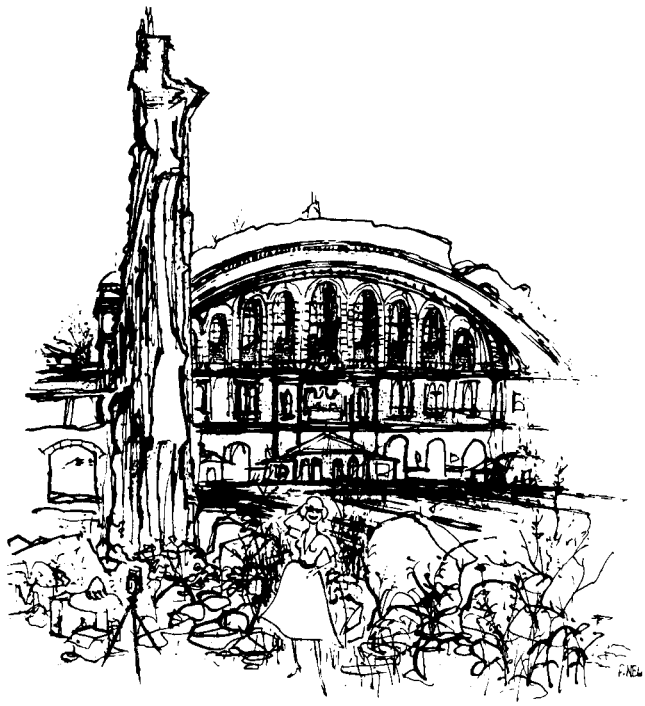
The book on which he was working at the request of a West Berlin publisher seems to have dealt with the occupation of East Germany by the Russians and the role of the Communist party in the formation of the German Democratic Republic. Sister Eucharis knew neither the title nor the name of the publisher, nor did she have a copy of the book. Shortly after the book had been published, my father was awakened one night by a knock at the window of his room. Opening the window, he recognised in the darkness the farmer from Alexanderdorf, a Communist but a good friend of the priory. He told father that the Russians were on their way to arrest him, and urged him to leave immediately. Father got dressed, took his briefcase, and set out for the 40-minute walk to the railroad station where he caught the midnight train to Berlin. In West Berlin he was put into a camp for East German refugees, and for months neither the sisters in Alexanderdorf nor the sisters in Castle Dinklage knew anything about his fate. One day, a woman who had occasionally visited the priory and who now worked as a nurse at the camp hospital, accidentally spotted him in one of the barracks. He was emaciated and ill, and his sight failed him noticeably. The lady notified the sisters in Alexanderdorf, who made arrangements to have him flown to the West. He spent some time in a hospital, and when he had recovered, the sisters at Castle Dinklage took him in.

In St Scholastika he continued to live in the accustomed manner. Although by now nearly blind, he managed to write for several hours a day, either translating Latin liturgical texts into the German vernacular, or helping the convent historian edit the manuscript for a history of the castle. When Ida Marie Soltmann moved into the convent, she took turns with the novices to read to him when his eyes were no longer able to focus on the page of a book. He was not lonely. As in Alexanderdorf, people from the neighbourhood and guests of the convent came to him to unburden themselves or simply to enjoy his fine mind and gracious, attentive manner; and as he had grumbled in Alexanderdorf about his "pigeon loft", he now liked to threaten the nuns that some day he would make the drawbridge work again and keep it up forever.

Sister Eucharis also explained to me why (in the only letter I had received from him) father had indicated that he wanted to come to America. Trivial in itself, the incident that prompted the letter nevertheless showed that father had to the end remained at war with that side of his character which mother had feared and which, when provoked, could easily erupt in destructive violence. My father was very fond of cats, and a Siamese or Persian cat shared his quarters for most of his life. In a convent, however, cats would have been a nuisance, and as long as he lived in Alexanderdorf, father submitted himself to the strict "no pets" rule. But one day, in Dinklage, a kitten found its way—or perhaps was coaxed to find its way—into father's room. For a while he succeeded in keeping the animal hidden from the sisters, but the cat soon asserted its independence and began to roam the grounds. The sisters patiently put up with it, but when it began to invade their cells, they asked father to dispose of it. Father procrastinated. Finally, while he was away from the convent for a few days, the nuns caught the animal and had it killed. Father was furious. For a week he locked himself in his room, not speaking to anyone and even refusing to eat. It was during that week that he asked me to help him emigrate to America. Father eventually made peace with the community; but, as Sister Eucharis put it, he never quite forgave the nuns their heartlessness. To my question why he had treated all of my letters with silence, she had no satisfactory reply.

IN THE FALL of 1960 father became ill and was taken to a hospital in a nearby town. He was seventy-four and had suffered from a heart ailment as long as I can remember. He died in February of the following year, but Sister Eucharis did not know the cause of his death. Nor could she tell me much about the last months of his life. A young nurse, who had befriended him at the hospital, told her that he had talked about little else but Annemarie and me, and that he had often cried.

Sister Eucharis accompanied me to the little church where he had been laid to rest. It was a cool, sparkling day in May, but the vaulted hollow was gloomy, damp, and bare; and its smell of old stone took me back to the days when father and I used to roam the churches along the Rhine. Sister Eucharis pointed to a spot in one of the pews, and I knelt. My eyes slowly grew accustomed to the dreary twilight, and I was startled when I saw, engraved in the slab underneath the pew, the words, "RICHARD KÜHN † 1886–1961."



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Jonathan Goodman

The Fictions of Murderous Fact

CRIME IS A LARGE subject, ranging from orchard scrumping to indiscriminate homicide. Even as I mention those two apparent extremes, I realise that I may have left something out at the ends of a scale between most petty, most heinous—and I recall a few sentences written by Thomas De Quincey in 1827. Though he was presenting a kind of surreal satire, he was, perhaps unwittingly, drawing attention to shifting views of the seriousness of types of crime when he noted that

> "...if once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination. Once begin upon this downward path, you never know where you are to stop. Many a man has dated his ruin from some murder or other that perhaps he thought little of at the time."

De Quincey's essay, "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts", makes a convenient starting point for a consideration of how writers, fascinated by criminal cases, or aspects of them, have created literary art from nature. It is no more than convenient, for accounts of cases, and transmutations of them, have a far longer history. One thinks, perhaps straightway, of the fourth chapter of the Book of Genesis, with its hearsay report on the case of Cain and Abel. And in Elizabethan times, the anonymous play *Arden of Feversham*—once attributed to Shakespeare—took its plot from a murder recorded in Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland,* which was one of the story-sources of the murder plays that Shakespeare undoubtedly wrote.

The decade or so around the publication of De Quincey's essay was special in the sense that a number of things came together to give impetus to literary murder. With the foundation of the popular press—relatively cheap newspapers vying with catchpenny broadsheets reporting particular events—the details of murders became common knowledge, public property. And, as it happened, the period had more than its fair share of picturesque cases. Murders were no longer parochial affairs, and people in the south were able to tut-tut delightedly at the pioneering entrepreneurship of Messrs Burke & Hare in Edinburgh, while the cotton-workers of the north-west could savour the rural nuances of the murder of Maria Marten, the mole-catcher's daughter, in the Red Barn at Polstead, down in East Anglia.

Often, it was the embroidery on a case, asides from the criminal act, that pricked the fancy of contemporary writers: men like Carlyle, Scott, and Charles Lamb (who, poor fellow, was not only for a short time suspected of being an accessory to a fatal mugging, but had the perhaps unique distinction among English writers of living with a murderess—his sister Mary, who had stabbed their mother to death during one of her bouts of madness). Also, there were George Borrow and William Hazlitt, both of whom had met John Thurtell when he was known simply as a low-life sportsman, not yet as the murderer of William Weare, a card-sharper and billiards-player who had cheated Thurtell of several hundreds of pounds.

In October 1823, Thurtell, who had lost heavily at other "sporting ventures" and was facing prosecution for fire-raising, was desperately in need of money. Learning that Weare had backed several winners at Doncaster Races, he broached the notion of killing him to two flash acquaintances, Joseph Hunt, a bankrupt publican, and William Probert, a bankrupt spirits-merchant. Having been promised their assistance, Thurtell invited Weare to Gill's Hill, near St Albans, for some shooting.

Things went wrong from the start. Hunt lost his way to the quiet spot chosen for the murder, a lane near Probert's cottage, so Thurtell had to despatch Weare unaided. As Richard D. Altick comments in *Victorian Studies in Murder:*

> "Thurtell could have used some help, to say nothing of moral support. . . . He had bought a pair of pistols at a London pawnshop for £1.15.0d., but they proved to be a poor bargain . . . because when he fired them into Weare's face, they merely had the effect of impelling Weare out of the chaise in a frantic attempt to run away. His assailant therefore had to convert one of his firearms into a bludgeon; he plunged the barrel into Weare's skull and, to adopt the blunt language of a contemporary narrative, 'turned it

JONATHAN GOODMAN, *who was for some years a theatre director and television producer, is now a full-time writer. As well as being the author of a number of books on crime (he has been described by Jacques Barzun as "the greatest living master of the true-crime literature") he was general editor of the Celebrated Trials series and editor of the anthology "The Pleasures of Murder" (Allison & Busby, 1983); he has also published novels and a volume of poetry. He has edited the late Rayner Heppenstall's journals under the title of "The Master Eccentric", shortly to be published by Allison & Busby.*

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through his brains.' The rest of the bloody details need not be specified; suffice it to say that as an afterthought Thurtell also slit his victim's throat.

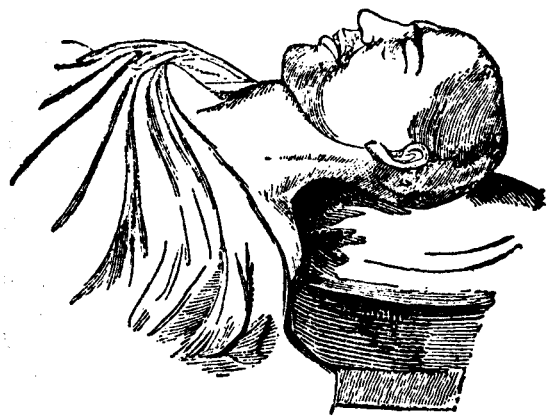
He then proceeded to Probert's cottage, where his accomplices awaited him. While supper was on the fire, the three went to the murder scene and put Weare, stuffed into a sack, under a hedge. On their return, all partook of the Proberts' meal, except for Thurtell, who was off his feed. Afterwards they drank and sang, and Thurtell, taking out Weare's gold watch and chain, gallantly hung the latter, which he said was 'more fit for a lady than a gentleman,' about Mrs Probert's neck. . . . Later the same night, the conspirators went out once more, thrust Weare's body over a horse, and brought it to Probert's pond, where they dumped it. They then crowned a busy day's and night's work by dividing the booty."

Next morning, as soon as it was light, Thurtell and Hunt returned to the lane, to "grabble" for incriminating evidence. They were not the only early risers, however: a couple of road-menders engaged them in conversation, and, as soon as they had dashed off, grabbled to more effect, finding, among other suspicious things, a pistol and a bloodstained knife. An hour or so later, Thurtell and Hunt transferred the body from one pond to another, then went their separate ways back to London.

They were arrested before the week was out. So was Probert, who at once offered to turn king's evidence. Thurtell and Hunt were convicted and sentenced to death; but subsequently Hunt was reprieved and transported to Botany Bay.

THURTELL APPEARS, scantily disguised as "Tom Turtle", in Hazlitt's essay "The Fight." But for a complete portrait, one turns to *Lavengro*, in which Borrow described Thurtell as

> " . . . a man somewhat under thirty, and nearly six feet in height. He was dressed in a blue coat, white corduroy breeches, fastened below the knee with small golden buttons; on his legs he wore white lamb's-wool stockings, and on his feet shoes reaching to the ankles; round his neck was a handkerchief of the blue and bird's eye pattern; he wore neither whiskers nor moustaches, and appeared not to delight in hair, that of his head, which was of a light brown, being closely cropped; the forehead was rather high, but somewhat narrow; the face neither broad nor sharp, perhaps rather sharp than broad; the nose was almost delicate; the eyes were grey, with an expression in which there was sternness blended with something approaching to feline; his expression was exceedingly pale, relieved, however, by certain pock-marks, which here and there studded his countenance; his form was athletic, but lean; his arms long. In the whole appearance of the man there was a blending of the bluff and the sharp. You might have supposed him a bruiser; his dress was that of one in all its minutiae; something was wanting, however, in his manner —the quietness of the professional man; he rather looked like one performing the part—well—very well—but still performing a part."



The corpse of John Thurtell

Thurtell crops up again in Borrow's *The Romany Rye,* though here one suspects that truth suffers in aid of an anecdote. A jockey recalls that he had asked the sportsman how he could repay him a debt:

> "He bade me come and see him hanged when his time was come. . . . I arrived at Hertford just in the nick of time. There was the ugly jail—the scaffold—and there upon it stood the only friend I ever had in the world. Driving my Punch, which was all in a foam, into the midst of the crowd, which made way for me as if it knew what I came for, I stood up in my gig, took off my hat, and shouted, 'God Almighty bless you, Jack.' The dying man turned his pale grim face towards me—for his face was always somewhat grim, do you see—nodded and said, or I thought I heard him say, 'All right, old chap.' "

The gig referred to by the jockey was not the famous one in the case. That belonged to Thurtell's victim, William Weare. According to Thomas Carlyle, there was an exchange between counsel and a witness at the trial: *Question*: "What do you mean by 'respectable'?"; *Answer:* "He [Mr Weare] always kept a gig." The idea of associating a gig with respectability so enchanted Carlyle that he coined the term *gigmanity* for bourgeois social pretension.

THOUGH Walter Scott took the trouble to visit the scenes of the crime, it appears that he was in two minds about the case, uncertain whether it displayed sufficient panache to warrant all the fuss. The same applies to De Quincey, who, after allowing his Connoisseurs of Murder their first fine careless rapture— " 'Well, will *this* do?' 'Is *this* the right thing?' 'Are you satisfied at last?' "—concluded that when the enthusiasm had subsided, "most judicious critics agree that there was something *falsetto* in the style of Thurtell."

It was not the illustrious writers who ensured remembrance of the case, but a broadsheet balladeer who cobbled together the quatrain:

His throat they cut from ear to ear,
His brains they punchèd in;
His name was Mr William Weare,
Wot lived in Lyon's Inn.

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This verse was a favourite of Robert Browning's. He learnt it as a child, and still recited it with relish when he was old, by which time he himself had made several contributions to murderous literature—most lengthily, inspired by an actual case, with *The Ring and the Book*.

I HAVE DWELT on the murder of Mr William Weare because it seems to me that it was the gig that gave crime literary respectability. Throughout the Victorian age—thought by George Orwell to be "our great period in murder, our Elizabethan period, so to speak"—writers found inspiration in criminous reality. I remember once chatting to an American crime historian, and being a trifle boastful of British murders. But he pointed out that it was not that we had all the best cases: simply that we had the best writers making our cases seem the best.

I suppose Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) is the most noted example of a factoid Victorian novel. Certainly, Collins borrowed incidents and characters from the Road House mystery of 1860, the murder of four-year-old Savill Kent, probably by his half-sister Constance;[1] and one can be just as sure that the episode in which Godfrey Ablewhite is lured to a house in Northumberland Street and there attacked is a re-phrasing of the so-called Northumberland Street sensation of 1861. The strangeness of that affair—never explained—brought a gasp from Thackeray:

> "The brave Dumas, the intrepid Ainsworth, the terrible Eugène Sue, the cold-shudder inspiring 'Woman in White', the astounding author of the 'Mysteries of the Court of London', never invented anything more tremendous than this. It might have happened to you and me. We want to borrow a little money. We are directed to an agent. We propose a pecuniary transaction at a short date. He goes into the next room, as we fancy, to get the banknotes, and returns with 'two very pretty, delicate little ivory-handled pistols', and blows a portion of our heads off. . . . What a cavern of terror was this in Northumberland Street, with its splendid furniture covered by dust, its empty bottles, in the midst of which sits a grim 'agent', amusing himself by firing pistols, aiming at the unconscious mantelpiece, or at the heads of his customers! . . . After this, what is the use of being squeamish about the probabilities and possibilities in the writing of fiction?"

Twenty years before, Thackeray had been one of the crowd of 40,000 or so who had watched the execution of Courvoisier, the Swiss valet who had slain his master, Lord William Russell. Dickens was there, too. He caught sight of Thackeray, but was unable to attract his attention. Both men were affected by the experience—Thackeray especially. He afterwards wrote the essay, "Going to See a Man Hanged":

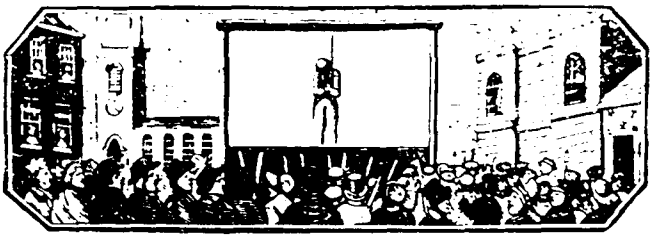
> "I feel myself ashamed and degraded at the brutal curiosity which took me to that brutal sight. . . . I pray to Almighty God to cause this disgraceful sin to pass from among us, and to cleanse our land of blood. . . . I fully confess that I came away that morning with a disgust for murder, but it was for *the murder I saw done.*"

Thackeray had become, and would remain, an opponent of capital punishment. Dickens, however, while being uncompromising in his belief that executions should be conducted indoors, relatively privately, was equivocal on the question of whether hanging should be done away with altogether. With this, as with many other subjects he wrote about both privately and publicly, as a journalist and as a novelist, he was conscious of what he called "the attraction of repulsion." It may be that, like most factual and fictional crime story-tellers, if they would confess, he wore two hats: yes, there are all sorts of arguments against capital punishment—and yet . . . and yet . . . speaking selfishly, professionally, one tends to side with the retentionists (or, now, revivalists) in the cause of drama, of suspense.

ONE CANNOT ESTIMATE the effects of what Dickens, primarily, and others wrote about crime and punishment—no more than one can do a head-counting exercise on how, in our own century, *A Pin to See the Peepshow*, F. Tennyson Jesse's novel (later turned into a play) about the Thompson-Bywaters murder case, persuaded believers in hanging to change their minds. All one can say is that Dickens, with some assistance, forced the public, politicians, and penologists to do more than simply rearrange their prejudices.

DICKENS was an enthusiastic public relations man for the new police. He hero-worshipped detectives: one in particular, Inspector Charles Field, who appeared undisguised or wearing the flimsy pseudonym of "Wield" in articles in *Household Words*, and as Inspector Bucket, probably the first police-detective in English fiction, in *Bleak House*. No one who has read that novel will have forgotten Mr Bucket and his fat forefinger:

> "When Mr Bucket has a matter of pressing interest under his consideration, the fat forefinger seems to rise to the dignity of a familiar demon. He puts it to his ears, and it whispers information; he puts it to his lips, and it enjoins him to secrecy; he rubs it over his nose, and it sharpens his scent; he shakes it before a guilty man, and it charms him to destruction. The Augurs of the Detective Temple invariably predict that when Mr Bucket and that finger are in much conference, a terrible avenger will be heard of before long. . . . He is free with his money, affable in his manners,



[1] Mary Hayley Bell's play *Angel*, first produced in 1947, is based on the Road House Mystery; and more recently Francis King has woven salient details of the case into his brilliant novel *Act of Darkness* (Hutchinson, 1983).

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> innocent in his conversation–but, through the placid stream of his life, there glides an undercurrent of forefinger."

Another of the characters in *Bleak House* was drawn from life; or perhaps one should say death, for the original of "Hortense", the murderous French maid, was Marie Manning, who, together with her husband Fred—and with Dickens looking on—was hanged on the roof of Horsemonger Lane Gaol in 1849. In some respects, the Manning case resembles the Crippen case, 61 years later: the body of the victim, Patrick O'Connor, once Marie's beau, was buried in quicklime beneath the kitchen floor; the Mannings were recklessly eager to dispose of O'Connor's assets; they were frightened into fleeing from justice. (Unlike Dr Crippen and his mistress Ethel Le Neve, who stuck together as "Mr and Master Robinson", the Mannings fled in different directions, Marie to Scotland, Fred to the Channel Island of Jersey.) A rather ordinary case, it seems today; but it caused great public interest—chiefly because Marie, once she was caught, tried to live up to the romantic picture of her painted by imaginative reporters.

A week or so before the execution, Dickens told his friend John Leech, the *Punch* cartoonist, "The doleful weather, the beastly nature of the scene, the having no excuse for going (after seeing Courvoisier) and the constantly recurring desire to avoid another such horrible and odious impression, decide me to cry off." But the attraction of repulsion proved too strong for him. On the eve of the event, he informed Leech: "We have taken the whole of the roof (and the back kitchen) for the extremely moderate sum of Ten Guineas, or two guineas each."

In 1852, when *Bleak House* began to appear, scenes of, and incidents in, the Manning case were brought to mind, and 'Hortense' was instantly recognised as a domestic version of Marie:

> ". . . a large-eyed brown woman with black hair; who would be handsome, but for a certain feline mouth, and general uncomfortable tightness of face, rendering the jaws too eager, and the skull too prominent. There is something indefinably keen and wan about her anatomy; and she has a watchful way of looking out of the corners of her eyes without turning her head, which could be pleasantly dispensed with—especially when she is in an ill humour and near knives."

THERE WAS, AND IS, a feeling in some quarters that writers who use real crime may be unthinking accessories before the fact of subsequent crimes. I have mentioned Courvoisier. It was reported that, in one of his varied confessions, he had said that he was motivated to kill Lord William Russell by reading Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* (1839). This caused quite an outcry—augmented by a public argument between Dickens and Thackeray, who had condemned *Oliver Twist* as a primer for aspiring villains.

The imitative syndrome is one of the few, the precious few, psychological notions concerning errant behaviour that deserve to be taken seriously. But, looking specifically at murder, what does one do about it? Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, the "Moors murderers", may have been excited towards evil by books, records, and relics relating to the Nazis. So should we ban commerce in anything to do with Germany in the 1930s and early '40s? It seems likely that Dr Crippen's mistress, Ethel Le Neve, hit upon the idea of using hyoscine to poison his wife after spending days in the library of a college of surgeons, leafing through books on toxicology. Should medical books be kept away from the laity? Or, indeed, from medical men, simply because so many members of their profession have put their knowledge to homicidal purpose?

I know of no factual books on crime, nor any crime novels based on fact, that have caused gentle readers to try their hand at murder. And I can think of none that, for sure, has put ideas into unimaginative, already-criminal heads. Graham Young, a fully-fledged murderer (and an inmate of Broadmoor) when Agatha Christie's novel *The Pale Horse* was published in 1961, may have been struck by the fact that the original means of poisoning outlined in that tale was available to him on his release; but *The Pale Horse* was pure fiction. (As far as I am aware, Mrs Christie resorted to reality in only one of her novels, *By the Pricking of My Thumbs*.)

I would argue that books that reconstruct or filch from real cases are more likely to be cathartic than incendiary. Generally, the message that comes across is either that "crime does not pay" or that the rewards are small compared with the risks.

Of course, people may criticise such books for another reason, a snobbish one. But rather than retort myself, let me quote Jacques Barzun, the leading American authority on crime writing:

> "Readers who refuse to turn to crime, whether in its fictional or historical form, generally give a strong reason for their aversion, and it is a reason not about themselves but about the fallen creatures who do enjoy those literary genres. The partakers are supposed to be athirst for crude sensations; they resemble the ugly mobs that storm the doors of the court at murder trials and secretly regret that capital executions are no longer public. To dissociate oneself from such as these seems natural enough.
>
> But like most moral imputations, this one is arbitrary and ill-founded. The connoisseurs of crime are for the most part people of sensibilities as delicate as the abstainers', and perhaps they have stronger minds. They relish the varieties of human behaviour, which is why they go to literature in addition to observing life. And in literature they find, among other types, tragedy, crime fiction, and what has come to be called 'true crime'."[2]

Speaking of true crime, Barzun points out that

> "The appeal of this species of composition is manifold. It presents ordinary human beings under stress: not just the principals, but a hitherto unconnected score of persons suddenly caught in the searchlight of a police investigation. They are buffeted and bruised by newspaper reports and repeated grilling in and out of court; their earlier doings, their secrets, their abilities and pretentions, are made into a public show. It is a grim novel in action, a novel in the mode

[2] Jacques Barzun, preface to Jonathan Goodman, *The Stabbing of George Harry Storrs* (Ohio State University Press, Allison & Busby, 1983).

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of Dickens and Dostoevsky, who in fact drew upon just such live materials for their most renowned effects."

A grim novel in action. . . . Yes, that is exactly what the crime historian—not the mere reporter, adept with scissors and paste—seeks to achieve. The novelist's devices—and sorts of fiction—will play a part in creating a readable truth.

BEFORE I GO ANY FURTHER, I must make sure that I have not been misunderstood. One sort of fiction—that which slants facts, omits others, and even tells downright lies in aid of an argument—has no place in the genre. Some label other than "true crime" must be found for the plethora of naming-the-Ripper books; and for the type of book exemplified by *They Hanged My Saintly Billy*, Robert Graves's audacious attempt, having picked and chosen what suited him from the trial transcript, to absolve the Rugeley poisoner, William Palmer[3] (who, in the view of Philip Collins, author of *Dickens and Crime*, may have become "Slinkton", the insurance-minded murderer in "Hunted Down", which appeared in 1859, three years after Palmer's execution). Using the methods of the Ripperologists and of the Graves school, one could argue that St Francis of Assisi was a vivisectionist, that many of Hitler's best friends were rabbis. Note what the American lawyer Louis Nizer has said:

> "It is possible to take the record . . . and by minute dissection and post-facto reasoning demonstrate that witnesses for either side made egregious errors or lied. Then, by ascribing critical weight to the exposed facts, the conclusion is reached that the verdict was fraudulently obtained. This was the process by which the Warren Commission Report on the Assassination of President Kennedy was challenged in a spate of books. To cite just one illustration, a constable deputy sheriff described the rifle which had been found on the sixth floor of the Book Depository Building as a Mauser, instead of a Mannlicher-Carcano, which it was. Out of this innocent error, due to ignorance or excitement, sprouted the theory that the real assassin's rifle had been spirited away and Oswald's rifle planted on the scene to involve him. Multiply this incident by many others such as someone's testimony that shots were heard coming from the mall, and the 'hiding' of the death X-rays of the President (since revealed), and you have a gigantic conspiracy by foreign agents, or government officials, or New Orleans homosexuals, or lord knows what to fix the blame on an innocent man, Oswald. Of course, all this was nonsense. . . ."

THERE ARE TWO WAYS of composing a true true-crime book. Someone like Rayner Heppenstall or Richard Whittington-Egan will work like a potter, treating the details he has collected as if they were malleable, kneading them into shape, building upon them.

Others work like sculptors in stone, chipping away at an over-abundance of research until they are left with a truth—the subtractive fiction—which is not necessarily the sum of many facts.

Compare the latter approach, in which words are used frugally, with that of a journalist. Speaking generally, the journalist's relief at having collected a few facts will lead to a determination to use *all* of them, no matter whether some are in opposition, muddying the picture. Of course, he will often have the constraint of a deadline: as Thoreau explained to an enquiring correspondent, "Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short." And some journalists are as concerned with the counting of words as with the choice of them, for they have their own version of Parkinson's Law: "Sentences should be expanded so as to fill the space available." Such journalism is exemplified by an every-story-tells-a-picture description of the scene of the stabbing of George Harry Storrs, false as well as florid, that I came across in my reading of contemporary accounts of the Gorse Hall murder case of 1909. Storrs, a Cheshire tycoon, lived at Gorse Hall, a mansion on a hill overlooking the cotton town of Stalybridge:

> "A dreary waste of moors with a lone grey house, dimly outlined in the mist, peeping through scrubby foliage. A

Dr William Palmer, "the accurst surgeon"

[3] The people of Rugeley, horrified at the notoriety that Palmer had brought on the town, sent a deputation to the Prime Minister, asking permission to change its name. "Certainly", Palmerston replied. "Why not name it after me?" The idea was dropped.

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> time-stained gaunt old house, a house that speaks of mysteries and whispers of tragedies. A gloomy, dreary, depressing house, a house that one reads of in thrilling but impossible novels. If ever there was a house designed for the scene of a murder, this is the house."

And so on. And on. And on until the number of words required by the editor had been achieved.

But, to plant a hackneyed quotation in a different context, a house is not a home. To the sculptor-type crime historian, a detailed, mortar-and-all description of a place—or, for that matter, a fact-crammed description of a person, including, perhaps, a reference to a small mole on his left buttock—may be not merely redundant but destructively irrelevant, deflecting the reader's attention from what is important in the story and in the telling of it. As a study of trial transcripts shows, the adding together and linking of facts does not invariably produce verity. When I reconstruct a case, the images I present are *mine*; they are distilled from research carried out over many months, even years; they are not a catalogue of details, left to the reader to sort out, to make sense of. The subtractive fiction need not provide the walls, the ceiling, the furniture—these can be invented by the reader, providing his own sort of fiction, bespoke to his perception of truth.

Hospital Rules

The women sit like sacks,
Slung into each armchair;
Hung heads, bent necks, bowed backs,
Caverns of flesh, they stare
At hands, laps, nothing; or where
We visitors drift and stray.
I open a file, and read there
That she used to sing all day.

The ward is crimson, square,
An echoing cube of space.
Shut windows and stuffy air
And not much else—the place
Could be empty, except for the base
Of the ruby walls, where the grey
Line of women sit waiting.—This case
Once used to sing all day.

She's fat, with a dull, flabby face.
She came when she was nineteen.
Yes, she'd like it, if we could trace
Her parents. They haven't been
To see her for years, which could mean
That they've died, or have moved away
From her home.—It was hilly, green,
And she used to sing all day.

A house on a hill. "We've not seen
Even a photo", they say.
"Hospital rules." They lean
Closer. "She sang all day."

The ward is bustling and bright.
Tall windows are open, stone stairs
Have been scrubbed till they sparkle, and light
Is switched on at the ceiling. Slow pairs
Of women bring stacked metal chairs,
Card-tables, cloths, trays, and display
Iced cakes and fresh flowers; and here's
The woman who once sang all day.

She is pleased with the new dress she wears,
With the lipstick and powder and scent
That a young nurse has lent her. She stares
At the door of the ward, which has meant
Quiet for her. If she went
And stood near, she could walk away
To the place where her childhood was spent,
Where she used to sing all day.

It's four o'clock. Sister has sent
A Staff Nurse to open the door
To the people outside, the event
We've been planning for weeks, the uproar
Of families meeting once more.
The patient, the parents delay
Then shuffle and chat and explore
Twenty years of not singing all day.

Hospital rules ignore
What hospital rules used to say.
We explain, this new meeting is for
Singing aloud all day.

Ruth Silcock

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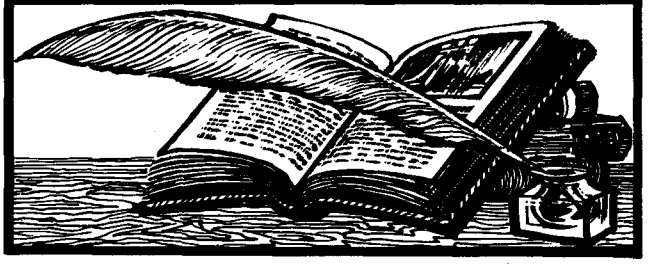
COLUMN



RAYMOND ARON DIED as he had lived: drawing unpopular distinctions. At seventy-eight, frail but determined, he went to give evidence in a libel action brought by Bertrand de Jouvenel against Zeev Sternhell of Jerusalem's Hebrew University—from which Aron held an honorary degree. On the stand, he protested against "guilt by association." It was inadmissible, he said, "to defame people who ought to be respected, even when they were wrong." Afterwards, he went to the back of the hall, then left. Only when the court rose did it hear that he had collapsed on the way out, and never recovered. A legend and a monument were gone.

Even his enemies saluted him. The Communist daily *L'Humanité* called Aron a fair-minded opponent, "*un adversaire loyal.*" The historian Philippe Robrieux paid oddly voluntarist tribute. "I try to be Marxist", he declared, "and Aron's death has not made me more sympathetic to his ideas. But I thought him measured and worthy of respect. I refused to regard him as an adversary, and I studied the very intelligent criticism he made of the views which I preferred."

A man of the Right? Of the Left? Of the Centre? Trying to categorise Aron was like looking for the vanishing lady. He wrote for *Le Figaro*, for *L'Express*, and for ENCOUNTER: but he had also contributed to *Combat* and to *Les Temps Modernes*. In wartime London, he had worked on *La France Libre*; and after the War, briefly, he was André Malraux's *directeur de cabinet*. Yet, as de Gaulle himself said, Aron was never a Gaullist. In a famous polemic published in 1955, *L'opium des intellectuels*, he attacked the pro-Soviet myopia of the French Left: two years later, in *La tragédie algérienne*, he bluntly told the Right that Algeria could not remain "part of France." In 1968, after the May *événements*, he produced a sardonic commentary, *La révolution introuvable*: but already in 1960 he had criticised the Sorbonne and the *agrégation* in much the same terms as some of the rebellious students. As a Jew, finally, he reacted fiercely when de Gaulle called the Jews a "*peuple d'élite, sûr de lui et dominateur*"; yet his last act was to defend a Frenchmen whom a Jew had ranked with the Fascists.

Many who read Aron thought of him as quintessentially lucid and cool. His written prose was dispassionate, almost arid. He dismantled confused propositions with a watchmaker's skill and the nerve of an explosives expert. Agnostic, disabused but not cynical, he looked on the twentieth century without extravagant hope for mankind. At the end of his memoirs he wrote:

"If I gave in to my more sombre moods, I would say that all the ideas and causes for which I have fought now seem to be endangered, just at a time when, in retrospect, it is agreed that in most cases I was not wrong."

Abstract, unemphatic, not unduly modest: the tone is characteristic. It barely sounds like someone who liked and admired the flamboyant André Malraux, and who in conversation could be both mordant and Puckish. Until his last years Aron had the air of a quizzical Mr Punch. This side of his nature seems muted in his memoirs: but it sparkles in *Le spectateur engagé*, described on p. 74 by Golo Mann. Aron's interviewers, Jean-Louis Missika and Dominque Wolton, discovered Aron through his *Dix-huit leçons sur la société industrielle* and his *Paix et guerre entre les nations*, then his critique of Stalinism, and finally his *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire*.

In the very first question to Aron, Wolton like many French commentators coupled his name with that of Jean-Paul Sartre. Contemporaries at the *Ecole normale supériéure*, Sartre and Aron remained friendly for many years. For a time, their academic careers ran parallel: Aron taught in the *lycée* at Le Havre, the "Bouville" of Sartre's *La nausée*. They disagreed over Munich, which both Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir backed; but the real rift came after World War II, when Sartre was a *communisant* neutralist and Aron supported the Atlantic Alliance. Opposition to the Algerian war brought them closer again. In 1960, seeing Aron in the street, Sartre went up to him. They shook hands and exchanged *normalien* greetings: "*Bonjour, mon petit camarade.*" They must have lunch, they agreed; but it never happened. Each went his way. The growing consensus now, even on the French Left, is that Aron's way was too long undervalued. A sign of the times, when Aron died, was a tribute from the singer and actor Yves Montand, husband of Simone Signoret and once a fashionable fellow-traveller. "It was often unfair to Aron", he said, "to compare him with Jean-Paul Sartre", and he condemned the Leftist slogan "Better wrong with Sartre than right with Aron."

Missika and Wolton must have heard many such remarks. They probe and provoke Aron as if impatient with his aloofness, his refusal to be labelled, his concern to distinguish, discriminate, and dissect. Yes, he agrees, the democracies could have stopped Hitler—but in 1936, not 1938. "The French did all that was necessary to bring about the War, because they were afraid of it, and rightly afraid." Yes, he did once declare: "The Left loves to celebrate its defeats." Take the Paris Commune—"horrible, detestable from every point of view." Yes, he did "analyse the Vichy régime without anger": "I generally prefer to understand and analyse rather than excoriate the enemy." At the end of the book, Aron adds some imaginary exchanges, lightly parodying his interviewers' irritation, and making them call him "a resigned, not a committed spectator—resigned to the misfortunes of others."

Sly self-mockery supposes a certain sense of oneself; but if this beams through these conversations, so does Raymond Aron's wit. "In 1949 to 1952, to be in favour of the Socialist régimes in Eastern Europe required an exceptional capacity for ignorance." From François-Poncet the elder: "The French are always surprised by the events they have predicted." "These so-called intellectual movements are very limited. They derive

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from the old, traditional role of philosophy teachers in the *lycées*, and their need from time to time for an ingenious way to present a view of the world more or less favourable to the Soviet Union in a form philosophically acceptable." But—"from time to time I get angry when I read so-called 'new philosophers', who have belatedly discovered that the Soviets are unbearable and, as a result, embrace no matter what." Criticising François Mitterrand's abortive "common programme" with the Communists, Aron even sounds like P. G. Wodehouse. "I have nothing at all against increasing the growth-rate. If it can be accelerated, I'm in favour. If earnings can be redistributed more fairly, I've absolutely no objection. . . ." He might almost add: "Jeeves will vouch for that."

He has most fun of all with the 1968 *événements* and the mythic status they still enjoy with Missika and Wolton:

> R.A.: No, no. It was the carnival aspect which bothered me in the long run.
> D.W.: Hold on—I don't understand. Was it a carnival or an institutional crisis? They're not the same thing.
> R.A.: They were both. . . . And I had no desire to play at carnivals. Besides, there was the marathon of chatter. For two weeks, the French broke their normal silence. They talked and talked and talked. . . .
> J.-L.M.: That was the "*prise de parole*." There was no harm in it.
> R.A.: Ah, yes. The *prise de parole*. Do you have pleasant memories of your *prise de parole*?
> J.-L.M.: Excellent memories.
> R.A.: And what conclusion did you reach? The conviction that you knew how to talk? Fine. That's wonderful.

Badinage apart, Aron is as wise in his interviews as in his memoirs. Now and then, he seems excessively sceptical. In 1950, when France was proposing a European Defence Community with a single army, partly to forestall national German rearmament, Aron remarked to Robert Schuman: "It's a strange idea—you don't want the Germans as allies, but you accept them as compatriots." Schuman smiled and answered: "Why not?" Aron recalls the incident, but still seems to miss the point that Schuman was making: alliances can be broken and national armies can turn against one; an integrated community is safer, and for keeps. Later, all the same, he shrewdly points out the danger of Germany's drifting towards neutralism—and the political drawbacks of the Soviet gas pipeline. He remained alert to unwelcome realities, right to the end.

Not only Frenchmen will miss him: for Aron was unique. He has no true successors or counterparts. Even to describe him is a compromise with impossibilities. Walter Lippmann combined with Isaiah Berlin? De Tocqueville combined with Hazlitt? Analogies falter and comparisons fade. I know of no commentator now living who enjoys the stature that Aron earned by his academic writing and his on-the-ball editorials. How many people can play chess and ping-pong at the same time?

If Aron had lived, it's tempting to speculate how he might have reacted to the autumn crisis in Grenada. He would have smiled, no doubt, to learn that Caribbean telegrams to the British Foreign Office were sent in error to a London businessman selling plastic bags. I don't know the French for "the cock-up theory of history": but this was a memorable *pagaille*. No less remarkable was the official response when the bagman telephoned: roughly, "Put them in the post: we've no one to take shorthand." If these are the standards of efficiency, fears of accidental nuclear holocaust, paradoxically, may be misplaced. Perhaps the real danger we should all be sweating over is that the damned thing *won't* go off and therefore won't deter.

Another feature of the Grenada crisis which Aron might have noticed was the imbecility of certain letters in the London press. Several desultory observers of world events claimed that they saw no difference between Grenada and Poland, or Grenada and Afghanistan. More serious citizens soon pointed out a few crucial details, including the Grenadians' obvious relief at their rescue; but it left one wondering what brand of political instant whip some letter-writers use for brains.

More curious, if more understandable, was the British Government's reaction. Time and the thirty-year rule may tell how fully Washington consulted London. Clearly, it was not fully enough—although there may have been reasons, and it's premature to apportion blame. So the British Government was miffed and caught off balance. Privately, it may have welcomed the outcome: publicly, it deplored the means. This left it doubly discomfited, looking both impotent and censorious. How dare you break into my house to pull my child out of the fire?

To put it like that exposes one strand of emotion underlying British attacks on "armed interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state." Grenada, as a member of the Commonwealth, doesn't look in London like just any sovereign state. Colonial habits of mind persist: so, less ignobly, does a sense of responsibility and kinship. When neither can be, or has been, honoured, the result is shame expressed in anger. To misapply Gerard Manley Hopkins, "It is Margaret you mourn for."

This said, there remains some substance in the "interference" charge. Some have addressed it in legal terms: how valid was the invitation from Grenada's Governor-General—how cogent was the East Caribbean agreement—how relevant was voting in the United Nations? By all accounts, legality was preserved at least as well as in France in 1958, when General de Gaulle somewhat abruptly returned to power. Yet this has not stifled allegations that the Grenada rescue "weakened international law" and strengthened the hand of the Soviet Union.

Raymond Aron, I suspect, would have made short shrift of that suggestion. Has Soviet behaviour been restrained by international law, or by Western firmness? Relations between the Western allies may have suffered: but they were always based on trust and common interest rather than law. Politics, in other words, must be the criterion for judging the Grenada crisis; and this resolves itself into two questions. How can small states be safeguarded from *coups d'état* or tyrannies? Which, if any, is to be the tutelary power? Here, I may differ from what Aron's view might have been. He, with stony realism, would probably have recognised "spheres of influence", as President Reagan did. Myself, I hanker after collective international effort—by the Commonwealth, by a united Europe, by the Western alliance, one day perhaps by a reformed United Nations. Alas, it's a debate we shall never have.

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Karl Marx

Scholar, Prophet, Politician—By RICHARD LOWENTHAL

ONE HUNDRED YEARS after the death of Karl Marx, there is little doubt that he was one of the outstanding thinkers of our age—that he has exerted a major influence on the view taken by modern man on his conditions of life and of his destiny. Little as contemporary social science and historiography are "Marxist" in the doctrinal sense of the term, as little could their total achievement be imagined without Karl Marx's contribution. At the same time, the teachings of Marx have given the impulse for two totally different kinds of mass movement, each of which has brought about far-reaching social transformations: the basically Social Democratic movements, which have helped to create a number of today's Western democracies and have reshaped most of the others in essential respects; and the Communist movements, from which arose the Russian and Chinese one-party dictatorships and the results of the expansion of their power. Even in the thinking of a number of independent revolutionary movements of the Third World, Marxian ideas are echoed at least in their Leninist version.

This multiplicity of effects is not to be explained merely by Marx's synthesis of ideas from a variety of different roots, nor by his impressive linking of such otherwise separated fields of knowledge as philosophy and history, economics and political theory. It has arisen, above all, from the duality of the impulses of Marx's thought. For Marx was, on one side, a scholar who devoted years of his life to an unending search for ever more comprehensive, empirically based, and logically coherent knowledge. But he was also, without being fully conscious of it, the founder of a secular religion—a doctrine of the achievement of salvation on this earth by social and political struggle for a perfect society free from all conflict among men. It is precisely this dual character of the teachings of Marx that explains their immense impact—but it has also determined its limits in the long run.

IN THIS CENTENARY YEAR *of Marx's death, Richard Lowenthal returns to the theme which has preoccupied him for half-a-century—as a young Communist youth leader in Heidelberg and Berlin, as an anti-Nazi refugee journalist (on "The Observer") in London during and after World War II, as a University teacher after his return to post-war Germany, and as a senior advisor to the Social Democratic Party in Bonn. When still in exile in England he wrote "Jenseits des Kapitalismus" (under the pen-name of Paul Sering) and it proved to be a seminal work of Marxian and socialist revisionism, clarifying for the European Left the differences between the Social Democratic and Bolshevik traditions. There has been no more consistent critic of totalitarian ideas and tendencies, and this has been reflected in the dozens of articles he has written for* ENCOUNTER *over 30 years, among which are "The 'Missing Revolution' of Our Times" (February-March 1981), "Dealing with Soviet Global Power" (June 1978), "Unreason and Revolution" (November 1969), "The World Scene Transformed" (October 1963), and "The Repudiation of Stalinism" (May 1956). There were recently, on the occasion of his 75th birthday, impressive celebrations in his honour in Bonn and Berlin.*

BEFORE TRYING TO justify my thesis in detail, a word about the roots of Marxian thought may be appropriate. A much-quoted commonplace refers to the influence of the French utopian socialists, of British classical political economy, and of German idealistic philosophy. We may get closer to the core of the question by saying that Marx developed the ideas of the radical wing of the French Enlightenment and of the great French Revolution; but he had also absorbed the—chiefly British—criticism of the absence of a sense of history among the spokesmen of the Enlightenment, and he consciously followed the Hegelian intention of a synthesis between rationalism and historicism. At the same time, he was decisively impressed by the experience of the opening age of capitalist industry that was most highly developed in England. Moreover, he at first perceived both the French political revolution and the English industrial revolution from the angle of a Germany that was less developed politically as well as industrially, but intellectually open for the new phenomena—and he shared Hegel's expectation that the "world spirit" was about to move "into another country" (meaning Germany). His vision of the world was formed on the eve of 1848 by the hope of another revolution which would transcend the achievement of its models. Only when that revolution had failed did Marx concentrate on

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his scholarly life-work—and on the equally long-term observation of, and advice to, the rising international labour movement.

WITH MARX his vision of a salvation on earth came first, and it inspired both the hard and tireless scholarly work as well as the political activity of his later years. In this vision of salvation, the idea of a perfect order of society that would be both reasonable and natural, derived from the Enlightenment, was linked with the faith in a lawful logic of history directed towards that goal. Comparable ideas of history had indeed been put forward in France by Condorcet, then by St Simon; and in Germany Hegel had developed his idealistic interpretation of human history as directed towards progress in the consciousness of freedom. With Marx, the concept of history as directed towards salvation by its inherent logic now took the form of postulating that at the origins of mankind there had existed everywhere a primitive but classless form of society—"primitive communism." In the course of economic and social development, different types of class societies had succeeded one another. At the end, a classless society would emerge again, this time on the "highest stage of development." The parallel between this vision and the biblical version of mankind's road to salvation, with its stages of paradise, fall and paradise, is obvious.

A New Key to History

BUT WITH MARX, that vision of an historical road to the salvation of mankind was given an empirical underpinning, described by him as "materialistic." In this view, the *ultimate* impulse to historical evolution was the interaction of increasing human needs and developing productive forces. The development of the productive forces, in turn, required at each stage the creation of new "relations of production", meaning for a long period the creation of class societies—such as at first the exploitation of slaves by slave-owners, then of unfree peasants by noble landowners, finally of "free" workers by the owners of capital. The transition from each of those social systems to the next stage was assumed to be achieved by class struggles—the *direct* impulse to historical change. At the end of this evolutionary process, the enormous increase of the productive forces in the capitalist industrial society would open the way of transition to a new, classless society; and it would be brought about by the class struggle of the industrial proletariat—the first class that could emancipate itself only by ending all forms of class society. In the sense of the underlying secular vision of salvation, of which Marx himself was not fully conscious, the proletariat was thus assigned the role of the Messiah.

In the orthodox interpretations of Marx by his pupils, this aspect of his vision of history as a secular religion was never recognised. It was rather presented as the fruit of a philosophy of "dialectical materialism." In fact, Marx had never attempted to create a philosophical system. In Hegel's dialectic, he had found a very fruitful *heuristic* method for his researches in the fields of history and social science, without mistaking it for a method of *proof* as the later scholastics of "Marxism" did. He was a "materialist" in the sense that he applied that method to the world of sense experience.

For an understanding of the Marxian concept of history it is, therefore, not necessary to study the posthumous scholastic reconstruction of his "philosophical system." What matters is that this concept of history contains, *independent* of the underlying salvational vision, important contributions to scholarly understanding. It is not only true that the class structures of societies are decisively shaped by the level and nature of their productive forces—e.g. the bureaucratic structure of the classic Asian despotisms by the vital role of a centralised system of artificial irrigation; or the rule of feudal landlords in Europe by the preponderance of a different type of agriculture; or the transition to a capitalist society with "free" labour by the transition first to industrial manufacture and then to machine-driven industry. It is also true that—at any rate in Western history, above all since the Renaissance—the economic dynamism of the productive forces and the developing human needs has been a main force of that self-driving dynamism of social evolution which became visible in class conflicts and in changes of social and political systems.

THE DISCOVERY of those historical and social relationships has changed the understanding of Western history for many people—including people who are quite unaware of its origin from Marx.

It does not, however, apply to the same extent to Russian history, in which dynamic changes were impelled for centuries not "from below" out of the structures of production and society, but from outside and above by the requirements of the external self-defence of the state machine of the Czars. It applies even less to many "underdeveloped countries" of the present—countries which, in their time, became victims of Western colonialism only because they had *not* produced an internal dynamism of development comparable to that of the West. The comparison shows that such a dynamism depends not only on economic and technological, but also on institutional and cultural preconditions—the very conditions which the developing nations of today are striving so hard to create belatedly.

But Marx's achievement in discovering *one* essential factor of the dynamics of Western development is not diminished by the fact that this discovery has not proved to be a universal key to historical evolution everywhere, as he believed. Such initial overestimations of basic new discoveries by their authors are a normal phenomenon in the history of science and learning.

The "Laws" of the Capitalist Economy

MARX'S THIRST for knowledge was, to be sure, not merely directed to the dynamics of historic evolution in general—it was turned, above all, to the dynamics of the accumulation of capital in the present and the future. In

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detailed studies he analysed how capital, defined by him as "value generating surplus value", had first in England subjected the former craft production to its control and created modern industry; and how capitalist trade had expanded the new type of production, not only within the Western world but to countries of wholly different civilisations—disrupting their traditions and institutions in the process. His description was utterly ruthless in pointing to the often inhuman consequences of capitalist exploitation, both in its homeland and in the countries subjected to it by frequently violent expansion. Yet it went with the limitless optimism of his expectation that the worldwide spread of an ever more productive technology on one side, the creation of a cultural *tabula rasa* by the destruction of all traditions on the other would create the preconditions for transcending capitalism in the classless society of the future. For Marx was convinced that even this mode of production would, despite its unprecedented dynamism, eventually turn, like all its predecessors, into a fetter for the further development of the productive forces; and that it would produce its own grave-diggers in an ever more numerous, ever more worldwide, and ever more unified proletariat.

For this expected process of the self-transcendence of capitalism, Marx's critique of political economy foresaw three essential "laws."

First, Marx regarded the dependence of capitalist production on the private owner's quest for profit as a necessary barrier to any rise in the income and standard of living of the working masses over a minimum required for the reproduction of "labour power", that would at any given time be flexible within conventional limits only.

Second, he foresaw an historic tendency for a decline in the rate of profit, due to the necessary rise of the share of capital in the total cost of production as technology advanced, and leading to an equally necessary periodic decline of total investment—in other words, to periodic economic crises. From the inevitable sharpening of those economic crises he expected an historic tendency towards the growth of the "industrial reserve army" of the unemployed, hence towards the increase of the miserable bottom layer of the proletariat and the material insecurity of all its members.

Third, basing himself on the obvious tendency towards a concentration of capitalist property in fewer and fewer hands, he looked to the continuation of the ruin of the independent middle class with which the triumph of industrial capital had begun, and therefore to an increasing polarisation of society between a dwindling minority of capitalists at one pole and a growing majority of dispossessed and miserable proletarians at the other, which could end only with the "expropriation of the expropriators" by a proletariat increasingly conscious of its situation and its interests.

I DO NOT NEED HERE to discuss the arguments which form the basis of the Marxian theory of exploitation and the theory of value underlying it. As controversial as those have always remained, as undisputed is the central role of the quest for profit in capitalist production. What mattered for the predictive value of the Marxian economic analysis was the question how far the inevitability of an increasing gravity of cyclical economic crises, of increasing polarisation of the social structure, and of increasing mass misery could be logically derived from that central role of the quest for profit—and how far those predictions have been confirmed in reality.

Most easily answered is the question concerning the validity of the "theory of concentration" as a theory of social polarisation. The derivation of the decline in the number of independent small owners—be they craftsmen, tradesmen or farmers—from the laws of capitalist production was logically correct, and it has been confirmed empirically. Yet, for a number of reasons, the expected social polarisation did not materialise. The independent small-scale employers have been partly replaced by suppliers of accessories and repair shops that are economically dependent but comparatively secure. The decline in the number of independent capitalist competitors is, in some degree, balanced by the broad spread of shareholdings among persons whose share in the *control* of "their" enterprise is wholly fictitious, but whose share in its *profits* is real. The proportion of industrial workers in all the advanced industrial countries, or (in the fashionable term) "post-industrial countries", is steadily declining in favour of office employees, service trades, and public services. In short, we do have a tendency toward the concentration of economic power—but no tendency toward social polarisation.

THE MARXIAN FORECAST of a necessary sharpening of the cyclical economic crises was based partly on the observation of the mid-19th-century crises, partly on the expectation, derived from his theory of value, that as more and more capital was invested, the rate of profit was bound to fall not only periodically within each cycle, but also historically from one cycle to the next. In fact, the typical interaction between the *cyclical* changes in the rate of profit and the cyclical crises has also been recognised by non-Marxist modern economists—as in the Keynesian concept of the "marginal efficiency of capital" and of the way in which its variations disturb the balance between saving and investment. But an *historical* law of the long-term decline in the rate of profit has not been confirmed. We have had, rather, an alternation of periods of milder or sharper cycles lasting about 25 years.

Above all, Marx could not have foreseen the introduction of a public policy aiming to achieve "full employment" and steady economic growth by the fiscal means suggested by Keynes. It was a policy which succeeded, in the quarter-century following World War II, in reducing the cyclical crises to marginal recessions. The increasingly serious recession of the last decade is due to structural changes such as shortages of energy and raw material resources, environmental problems, and shifts in the global division of labour—changes that cannot be mastered by the Keynesian methods of controlling global demand. But they have no specific causal relation to the dynamics of the quest for profit either—and they do not spare the state-owned industries of the self-styled "socialist countries."

THE MARXIAN PREDICTION of an increasing "immiseration" of the masses depended logically on the expectation of increasing

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social polarisation and of worsening crises. Accordingly, it has been as little confirmed as its premises. Under the aegis of the "welfare state" the standard of living of the industrial workers (and of the working population in general) has risen in the Western world to such an unexampled degree that, in the industrial countries with capitalist or mixed ownership, people have practically stopped talking of a "*proletariat*", unless the reference is to the "sub-proletariat" of disadvantaged marginal groups, usually consisting of racial or national minorities. This is a serious problem in a number of countries—but it is not connected with the Marxian prediction. Hence, the working class in the Western industrial countries, far from developing a revolutionary consciousness, is increasingly integrated in democratic society. This is so even where it traditionally votes Communist, or did so until recently. The so-called "Euro-Communism" in the Latin countries repeats, with a certain time-lag, the earlier evolution of Social Democracy in Western and Central Europe towards a policy of reform in the framework of the democratic state.

IN THE POLITICAL TEACHINGS of Karl Marx, we must distinguish between two components: (*1*) a utopian-revolutionary concept, developed in the *Communist Manifesto* and in the course of the 1848 revolution, and maintained in later, non-revolutionary periods as a theoretical long-term goal; and (*2*) a concept for the role of the actually developing, national and international labour movement in the non-revolutionary present, practised by Marx during the 1860s in the First International and thereafter.

The basic political concept of Marx was founded on the idea that each state is the instrument of the power of a ruling class for holding down the classes it exploits. In the classless society of "primitive communism", no state had existed; and none would exist in the classless society of the future. In that sense, all capitalist states were necessarily "dictatorships of the bourgeoisie", regardless of whether their political form was monarchic or republican, dictatorial (as in the France of Napoleon III), or parliamentary (as in Britain). Only the seizure of power by the proletariat could end this class rule of the bourgeoisie. But even that could not bring about a classless and stateless system at once. Between capitalist and communist society, there must inevitably intervene a period of the revolutionary transformation of one into the other—and that transformation could only be achieved by the dictatorship of the proletarian majority over the remnants of the exploiting classes.

THE CONCEPT of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was not invented by Marx. It goes back to the tradition of the French communist conspiracies of Babeuf in the *Grande Révolution* and of Blanqui in Marx's time. With them, its political meaning had been the dictatorship of the disciplined party, organised on centralistic principles, which they tried to create. In that sense it was taken over by Blanqui's friend, the Russian revolutionary exile Tkachev—and later put into practice by Lenin as part of *his* "Marxism." But with Marx himself, the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat did *not* have the meaning of a party dictatorship. Marx described the dictatorship he looked forward to by its class content; but he had rather ill-defined ideas about its political form, which changed repeatedly in the course of his life. Originally, he thought of a proletarian analogy to the dictatorial phase of the "bourgeois" French revolution under Robespierre and the *Comité du Salut Public*—which was *not* the dictatorship of an organised party. During the revolution of 1848, in which Marx actively participated in the ranks of the radical German Democrats while fostering the emerging German labour movement, he advised the members of the Communist League (the leadership of which he had assumed) to act similarly, since he saw "his" Communists as a kind of intellectual leaven in the mass movement, but believed they should become "no separate party beside, or in contrast to, other workers' parties" (as he had written in the *Communist Manifesto*). In the spring of 1850, after the defeat of the revolution, Marx criticised his own conduct (in an address by the Central Board of the Communist League) for having neglected the cohesion of the League during the revolution. This is the one and only document in which he stressed the role of the revolutionary party as crucial —possibly under the influence of Blanquist exiles with whom he then cooperated in London. But only a few months later he dissolved the Communist League because it had become a sect engaging in revolutionary rhetoric without understanding the post-revolutionary situation.

IN THE First International, from 1864–72, Marx tried to influence all affiliated workers' organisations, but he never undertook the founding of a party sworn to his ideas. In 1871, he glorified in his address on "The Civil War in France", in the name of the International's General Council, the Paris Commune as the first example of a "dictatorship of the proletariat." Yet the Commune was anything but a party dictatorship—its freely elected organs contained a plurality of independent parties with the Blanquists in a clear minority. What Marx regarded as a model for the future, apart from its social measures and its fighting spirit, was the attempt to combine legislative and executive power in the hands of the elected workers without any professional bureaucracy, and the right of the voters to recall them at any time. It was this idea of a "radical, direct democracy" which Lenin described in 1917 as the model for the Soviets *before* he was in power—a model he quickly abolished *after* the seizure of power by subjecting these Soviets to the control of his Bolshevik party. Finally, soon after the death of Marx, his lifelong comrade Friedrich Engels was to describe the *democratic republic* as the natural political form of a "dictatorship of the proletariat" in the Marxian sense.

Of course, Marx remained, right to his death a hundred years ago, a revolutionary not only in the social, but also in the political sense of the term. But he was not the propagandist, and even less the organisational precursor, of a party dictatorship. Among the socialist thinkers who claimed, in the early 20th century, to stand in his tradition, Rosa Luxemburg with her belief in the revolutionary spontaneity of the masses was closer to him than Karl Kautsky on one side, or Lenin on the other. And even Marx's conviction of the inevitability of a

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violent political revolution, an armed seizure of power by the proletariat, as the only road to the socialist goal, was restricted by him as early as 1872, at the moment of the dissolution of his First International, to countries with a strong military and police machinery, like the France of Napoleon III, and the Germany of Bismarck. In his famous Amsterdam speech after the split in the Hague, he expressed the view that in countries without a standing army and a centralised police, like Britain, the United States, and perhaps also the Netherlands, a democratic victory of the labour movement without a violent revolution was conceivable.

The Teacher of the Labour Movement

WHAT OF the other part of Marxian political thought—his ideas of the long-term tasks of the labour movement in a non-revolutionary situation? For all his internationalism and his conviction of the importance of a theoretically based concept of the socialist goal, this thought was based on his realisation that the workers' movement necessarily passes through different experiences in the conditions of different countries, and is therefore bound to develop different forms of struggle. Marx was able to exercise great influence on the documents of the International (beginning with its inaugural address) due to his enormous knowledge of political and social conditions, his international horizon and the coherence of his theoretical concept. But he never tried to force by organisational manipulations a unified programme and common strategy on such thoroughly different affiliated organisations as the British trade unions (with their great organisational strength and their aversion to any formation of a party), the syndicalist unions of the Latin countries (who were first under the anti-political influence of Proudhon, later under the anarchic-revolutionary influence of Bakunin, and always organisationally weak), the German-speaking Swiss Social Democrats and the two German Social Democratic organisations, at first prevented from formal membership in the International by a government ban. Marx relied on his certainty that those diverse movements would eventually be brought closer to each other and to his own ideas of the goal by their own experience, and saw his task in first starting this process by stressing the common basic interests and later promoting it by advice and discussion without ever trying to exert a commanding authority.

A NUMBER OF BIOGRAPHERS—who appear to be more familiar with the outbreaks of personal fury and contempt against his "rivals" in his private correspondence than with the practice of his political conduct in the International—have drawn the portrait of a zealot thirsting for power, whose orthodox intolerance and sense of mission had made him a natural precursor of Lenin and even Stalin. In doing so, they have vastly overestimated the personal faults of a less than lovable character, attributing to them undue historical significance, and have often underestimated the intellectual and political achievements of a great thinker to an absurd degree; and they have assigned an unmerited ancestor to Bolshevik dictatorship. Of course Marx, like all the other leaders holding different positions, tried again and again to *win over* the International to his views on specific points by arguments. But he headed no party or organised faction of his own within its ranks; and for that reason alone he could not and would not try to *force* his particular views on it. Above all, the preservation of the unity of the "International Workers' Association" consisting of those diverse movements seemed more important to him for its future development than any quick acceptance of his own theories. The final split, after the defeat of the Paris Commune, was not a consequence of Marx's intolerance, but of the unceasing conspiratorial activity of Michael Bakunin, who had really formed an international faction and compromised the International at the same time by his heedless cooperation with that fanatical Russian devotee of destruction, Nechaev. It was that development that left to Marx in 1872 only the road of separation and dissolution for preserving the future of the movement.

THE OPEN-MINDEDNESS of Marx to a multitude of forms of the new movement—which did not prevent him from criticising what he regarded as the national prejudices of each—was still demonstrated in the last decade of his life. Thus he followed the evolution of both the streams that were to form German Social Democracy—that founded by Ferdinand Lassalle and the organisation formed by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht (with whom he had friendly personal relations)—to their confluence at Gotha in 1875; and he welcomed the founding of the party there. At the same time, he harshly criticised in an internal document the formulation of the new party's goals. Thus, he also showed his respect for the Russian revolutionaries of the *Narodnaya Volya*, who in the 1870s had been driven on to the road of terrorism not by a doctrinaire preference for destruction like Bakunin, but by the complete absence of scope for any kind of democratic activity—and who, at the same time, proclaimed their determination to hold free elections after the overthrow of Czarism. It was in a letter to their protagonist, Vera Sassulich, that Marx wrote the famous words disclaiming the idea that his teachings constituted a "*passe-partout*" for the strategy and tactics of the socialist movements in all countries and all conditions.

I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO SUGGEST how elements of a faith in salvation on this earth mingled and interpenetrated in Marx's teachings with elements of an often pathbreaking scholarly analysis. That applied also to Marx's political activity. Profoundly convinced of the historical importance of the emerging labour movement, he wished to give it a clear idea of a common task transcending all its national and doctrinal differences and of a common goal of social transformation—if you will, a common vision of the salvation to strive for. But he always saw himself only as the *teacher* of that movement, not as its *leader* in an organisational and political sense. He wished to be its *prophet*, not the Messiah—the Messiah of mankind, in his view, was the working class itself.

Just this marks the distinction of principle between the

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secular religion of Marx, on one side, and the totalitarian movement and the totalitarian state built on this secular religion by Lenin on the other. It is of the essence of a true totalitarian movement that it ties the hope of salvation to a particular party and a particular leader. Then faith and hope are no longer attached to an objective social entity, a class or nation, but to a party and a person: the Messiah gets a proper surname. The utopian element in Marxism therefore, the element of secular religion, was certainly *one* condition for the later evolution towards Bolshevik dictatorship, but it was not a *sufficient* condition. The totalitarian state was one *possible* development of Marx's teaching, but not its necessary consequence—and certainly not one intended by its creator.

The Later Fate of the Scholar

THIS BRINGS ME to the question of the historic fate of the Marxian teachings. I have distinguished in them the two elements of a quasi-religious promise of salvation on this earth and of a scholarly achievement of revolutionary originality and impact; and have also shown how both elements were intermingled in Marx's political ideas. It is only natural that the historic destinies of the two elements should have been very different.

It is the typical fate of pathbreaking scientific discoveries that at first they often arouse bitter opposition from the experts in the field. A phase of gradual achievement of recognition is typically followed by their integration into the sum total of accepted knowledge, from which they are less and less distinguishable. Finally, the further course of scientific development makes them wholly or partly outdated; and they find their place in the history of thought and scientific enquiry.

By contrast, secular religions often start with a breakthrough of passionate faith as a sequel to a prolonged crisis of society. Yet because they are tied to the conditions of a particular phase in history (and because they promise a paradise on earth that cannot be brought about) they have necessarily a more limited span of life than those culture-forming religions anchored in a transcendent faith. Where no attempt is made at creating the earthly paradise by revolution, they pale sooner or later, and become a mere background decoration to everyday life. New crises of society may indeed, in certain conditions, stimulate a "revival" of the faded salvational hopes; but that is bound to pass even more quickly than the original movement. Where, however, the attempt at creating paradise by revolution is made in earnest and is finally recognised, after great efforts and sacrifices, to have failed, the would-be religious ideologies lose their credibility, leaving only a cynical jargon behind.

THOSE TYPICAL STAGES may also be observed in the fate of the Marxian scholarly discoveries on the one hand, and the Marxian utopian promises on the other. The Marxian idea of the role of productive forces, modes of production, and class struggles in the dynamics of history have, after strong initial resistance, exerted an immense effect on the historiography and sociology of our age—far beyond the circle of self-declared "Marxists." But while the Marxian questions in these fields have proved extremely fruitful, the attempts to give doctrinaire "Marxist" answers met all the more resistance the more such issues were taken up in the solid work of objective research.

I have already pointed to the different course of history in non-Western cultures which lack the inner dynamism characteristic of the West, and thus to the importance of cultural and institutional factors underestimated by Marx. And while Marx's often brilliant contributions to contemporary history show clearly that he had far from a narrow concept of the predominance of economic *motivations* in human behaviour, the course of recent history (including the history of the labour movement and of economic life) shows as clearly that he grossly underestimated both the role of nationalism and the effectiveness of state action in modern societies. Thus, the recognition of the basic historic and sociological discoveries of Marx and their integration into the general development of our knowledge has also been necessarily followed by the recognition of their limits.

IN ECONOMIC SCIENCE, the Marxian theory of value never gained wide acceptance, but the concept of capitalism as an historic type of economic system in which the quest for profit has developed a unique dynamic force is largely accepted. The harmonistic interpretation of that economic system which Marx fought—the view that a minimum of state intervention in the working of the market assures a maximum of undisturbed working of the system—has not, indeed, disappeared from scholarly discussion. But it is more noticeable in the preaching of its advocates than in the practical conduct of the governments of capitalist countries (apart from their hardly successful revival under the slogan of "monetarism").

While it is true that the Keynesian alternative to this harmonistic doctrine coincides in some crucial points with the Marxian theory of the crisis cycle—though Keynes was apparently unaware of that coincidence—it is no less true that the economic policy of manipulating global economic activity by monetary and fiscal means (as first developed by Keynes and Swedish economists) has overtaken the Marxian theory of the cycle. If Marx did not foresee the economic steering capacity the state could develop even while capitalist ownership of the means of production continued, he could even less foresee the entirely new causes of crises due to physical limits of the growth of production caused by the exhaustion of sources of energy and raw materials and to ecological damage increasing with economic growth. It is, in fact, one of the greatest post-Marxian changes in our way of thinking that in the place of his expectation that the productive forces would some time be fettered by capitalist ownership, and of his hope that socialism would free them again, the general worry of today is due to the fact that a hitherto limitless unleashing of the productive forces in capitalism has been accompanied by an equally limitless unleashing of destructive forces.

The Fate of the Political Teacher

MARX'S POLITICAL CONCEPT of the role of the proletariat has substantially contributed to the awakening of self-confident workers' movements in many countries, and also to the orientation of those movements

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towards international cooperation, which soon after his death (in 1889) found expression in the founding of a new International of democratic socialist parties. The understanding by those parties of the need to cooperate with independent trade unions as representing the immediate daily interests of the workers has also been furthered by his ideas. But his doctrine that under conditions of capitalist relations of production, any state, whatever its political form, must be an instrument of the "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie" reflects its origin in a period before the full development of modern democracy, in which the advanced European states had either no universal equal suffrage or no governments responsible to parliament.

Accordingly, the broader the following of the workers' political parties, the more they concentrated on the task of combining the struggle for the social rights of the workers with the struggle for a democracy of equal suffrage—for a "people's state", to use the slogan of the Gotha programme which Marx despised. They regarded themselves as revolutionary only as long as those democratic rights were withheld from them. To the extent that the "bourgeois state" granted them social and—even imperfect—democratic rights, most of those "social-democratic" parties thus began to identify at least partly with the interests of "their" state. It was an evolution that culminated in 1914 in the approval of war credits by their majorities, which was viewed by a minority of revolutionary-minded Marxists and of strict pacifists as a betrayal of the principles of international socialism and led to the temporary collapse and later split of the Second International.

At the same time, the Marxian goal of the dictatorship of a proletarian majority—which, as I have mentioned above, was never made precise by a consistent idea of its political form—was reduced to absurdity by history; and that in two ways.

On one side, the share of the industrial proletariat in the population of the advanced industrial countries declined after a certain point. Even before that, the idea of the "coming revolution" produced in those countries not an active will to struggle for power, but merely the passive expectation of a future collapse of the capitalist system. With the growth of democratic institutions and the growing integration of the working class in industrial society, even that expectation paled more and more.

On the other side, the will to revolution remained alive, above all, in underdeveloped and undemocratic countries in which the working class was an obvious minority and its party politically suppressed, as in Russia. And there the Communist revolution, while pretending to speak in the name of Marx, led—just as, later, in other underdeveloped countries—to the total party dictatorship of a minority, which Marx had neither foreseen nor desired.

The Fate of the Prophet

After this review of the fate of the scholarly analyses and forecasts and the political concepts of Marx, the time has come to pose the final question about the fate of the Marxian secular religion, the inheritance of the promise of salvation announced by the secular prophet Karl Marx.

In the Communist-ruled countries—including most particularly Russia and China, where the greatest and bloodiest upheavals have taken place in the name of that faith—it is dead today. Though its governing parties may still look at the world through a doctrinal prism which they call "Marxism", they no longer expect the achievement of the perfect, conflict-free Communist society, for which Khrushchev dared as late as 1961 to set "1980" as a date, and for the sake of which Mao Tse-tung as late as 1966 initiated the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" which threw back his country's development for decades.

In the labour movement of the Western industrial countries, this promise of salvation has long lost its vigour. This is due to the achievement of democratic political systems and the replacement of the type of capitalism analysed by Marx by a mixture of private ownership and public control with a high degree of social security. The loss of virulence began in the Social Democratic parties, then proceeded quietly in the adjustment of the remaining Communist mass parties to the democratic order, and finally became obvious when those parties were officially converted to a "Euro-Communism" no longer claiming to be revolutionary.

However, even while this latter stage was reached in the late 1960s, an astonishing revival of a would-be Marxist search for secular salvation began about that time—*not* in the working classes, but in the "protest movement" of the students. It produced, besides enthusiastic and sometimes violent demonstrations, a flood of neo-Marxist literature. That neo-Marxist youth movement found no political means for changing society as a whole; and it was to prove of very limited duration—not, indeed, because the next young generation proved to be more satisfied with the existing condition of society, but because it no longer shared the faith, rooted in the Enlightenment, in a salvation on earth by a utopia proclaimed in the name of reason. Dominated by the double fear that mankind was doomed to perish by nuclear war or by the ever-increasing poisoning of the environment, it is inclined to see the limitless growth of the productive forces as a road not to salvation but to catastrophe. Karl Marx no longer has a message for this generation with its deep scepticism towards both human reason and industrial progress.

The same is also true for the most recent movements in the underdeveloped Third World. There, revolutionary movements—seeking to combine nationalist and socialist ideas into a programme of rapid modernisation in independence from the West—drew for some two generations their ideological nourishment from a Marxism coloured by Leninist interpretation. But most of them failed in this enterprise. Today we see, on one side, a number of rising "New Industrial Countries" which have rejected the revolutionary road; and, on the other, countries which have failed to overcome the difficulties of modernisation, and in which new, *anti*-modernist movements are turning away from the model of modernisation on the Western pattern of which Marxism, too, is a variant. The barrier between any influence of Marx and the new anti-modernist movements of the Third World (e.g. those inspired by Islamic fundamentalism)—as between his influence and the

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"alternative" movements of contemporary Western youth—is created by his roots in the European rationalism of the Western Enlightenment.

Yet we of the older generation, who once critically absorbed the teachings of Marx the thinker without accepting his secular religion, will neither forget what science (including so-called "bourgeois science") has learned from the light he threw on the history of mankind—nor what the young movement of industrial workers, starting without any rights, has gained, thanks to his message, in self-confidence and cohesion. And we shall not abandon the lesson that we have drawn from our dialogue with Marx's ideas: that mankind must continue to look for a way into its future, without a faith in earthly salvation, but with a devotion to the guidance of reason.

The 1914 Party

Across the lawn a long parade of girls
With buttoned gloves conveys unpassing time
And underneath the beech, a wide skirt swirls:
Far out, like rhyme.

Dressed as a major in some abstruse corps
With Sam Browne belt, and crowns upon my sleeves
I slap by bulging cords, not worn before.
No one believes

My kind of officer. No pips or gun,
Or any polish on his riding-boots,
And my sword-frog and flask are worn for fun.
If someone shoots,

His make-believe loud shell will make a bang
And faze the ladies, twirling parasols.
Not one of us could march a parasang
Or fill with holes

A can of beer set up upon a cart
At fifty yards. I stroll, and would salute,
Though rather warily, what might impart
A distant hoot

Of laughter, a real military man,
This proper major, eighty-six years old,
Stiff on his stick, with keen eyes and a tan,
Whose fire's grown cold.

Medals come easy, like this DSO
Whose colours nip my undeserving chest.
But his were his. Yes, that was long ago,
And that seems best.

But still, inside my head, becapped and grey
With middle age, I think a fine salute
And make it stick. We play a game today
But it takes root.

And in my mind, remembering that war
My father died in, and the one that's done,
Or may be done, this game is played with awe.
And what's begun

In quirky humour, ends as reverence.
The women furl their things. It starts to rain.
And the Edwardian age, bought for some pence
And a frill train,

Is drawn indoors. There sepia photographs
Of Wilfred Owen, and of Hemingway,
Who wears his helmet proudly, but still laughs,
Preserve our play

And set it in a frame. I turn and pour
Another glass of port for someone new
In ordinary clothes, who likes my floor
And wants the loo.

Outdoors in the garage, a frail red cross
Indicates where our dressing-station lay.
My old wound stirs, that massive sense of loss.
It comes to prey

On all I have. Whenever I'm alone
It grips with claws at what I cannot be,
One of those dead who gave past war its tone
And made me, me.

I watch the tears of water on the pane
Outside the library. I hear the birds
Chatter in fear, as I twist round my cane.
Words are just words

And these, though mine, change nothing. All this year
The seasons have prolonged forgotten growth
And flowers budded, and my death grown near,
And we are both,

Lisa and I, set forward in a way
That may preserve the best, and, should we die,
Still honour all the braids of yesterday
And hold them high.

This feels a duty. To receive our boons
And rinse them, torn like colours from the past,
And, as with these forced rituals, mark some runes
And nail them fast.

George MacBeth

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Old Jewel

Grenada's Invaders & Critics—By EDWARD PEARCE

TO SAY that the British establishment took the ousting of the Cubans and the Coard-Austin Junta from Grenada badly would be putting it in very direct language. Admittedly the US government kept its cards close to its T-shirt until very late. Though, given the reception they then received, such discretion may have been well advised. "HOW AMERICA LIED" said the liberal *Observer* in a headline, but then, as the same *Observer* had carried another headline, "GRENADA FEARS BRITISH INVASION", a week earlier, reasons of *amour propre* may have been involved.

However, no one in the United States should underestimate the extent to which, at least initially, received standard opinion in Britain hated the affair.

Brian Walden in *The Standard*, the London evening paper, had adjectives for us. Starting with the headline—"IT'S OUR LIVES TOO THEY'RE PUTTING ON THE LINE", he proceeded by way of "foolish" and "dangerous" (the invasion) to "pig-headed" and "fatuous" (in describing "violations of international law which disgrace the Western cause in the eyes of the world"). The Americans "shamelessly lied to us. . . . British public opinion is fed up to the back teeth with their Elmer Gantry moralising, their gross, ignorant insensitivity to European concerns, their low-grade, cut-price Machiavellianism." The British, Walden says, are "reluctantly coming to the conclusion that the Reagan crowd are stupid isolationists quite unfit to control a superpower. All they want are cheers in Orange County California."

There is a lot more of this sort of thing and it makes depressing reading because Walden, although facile and never remotely fulfilling the political promise of his youth, when he looked like prospective Cabinet material in a moderate Labour Government, is no anti-American and in no sense a man of the Left. He is saying out loud what Foreign Office people smirkingly intimate: that the American administration is stupid, primitive, and absurd.

That sort of attitude is always echoed by the determined Charles Wheeler, the BBC's US correspondent, who never hesitates to editorialise against the administration and Mr Reagan personally. Such opinion-slinging in a correspondent is supposed to be totally against the practice and the constitution of the BBC. We also had *Newsnight* on BBC 2 giving a free run to Georgi Arbatov, to put the silky case that the present American administration were "ignorant to the point of illiteracy" in foreign affairs.[1] Add the fact that it was universally reported that the Queen of England, asserting her role as Queen of Grenada, was furious, and that Mrs Thatcher publicly dissociated herself from the US action, and we have highly placed discontent.

Never mind the far Left who in the House of Commons put down a motion congratulating the Cubans on their restraint! Never mind the zany Right—Enoch Powell, who has a hatred of the United States going back to the decline of his beloved Empire, or his Fleet Street echo, Andrew Alexander of the *Daily Mail*. "Hysteria is not a new phenomenon in the USA", said Alexander (no, nor a new one in Europe). Mr Alexander believes that if a World War starts it is more likely to be done at the instance of the USA than the USSR. And he says, in a voice which suggests a ringed little finger pointing at right angles from the handle of his teacup, "The downing of the Korean airliner was a case in point. One needed to be in the USA to witness the note of real hysteria. I daily expected to see borzois stoned in the street."

The problem is that people altogether more reasonable than the far Left or the chauvinist Right have taken to a degree of anti-Americanism which should be worrying. But it should not worry anyone in the States into any change of policy. Indeed the chief people it should trouble are us, the British and all the other Europeans.

Of two major problems, one is an ill-founded superiority complex. We take our *savoir faire* (and our *savoir penser*) altogether too grandly, assuming that our long, indolent dependency has given us a Greek wisdom to instruct a group of Romans who, according to Brian Walden, are not fit to run Rome. A nation whose Foreign Office, in attempting to report back from the West Indies, telexed by mistake a Swedish plastics firm in London who have an old Foreign Office number; and then, when the news was urgently forwarded by an obliging

[1] This pushes Arthur Schlesinger's contention that, as a former Dean of the University of Chicago's Business School, George Shultz is only a "three-star intellectual" rather further than he perhaps intended.

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Scandinavian, showed no interest, is not well placed to be one-up on anybody! "Trouble in the Caribbean?—drop a note to Lundquist" is not a very encouraging approach. It is also astonishing to see *The Observer* report, with lofty approval, that the Foreign Office only has a fairly junior officer on duty at weekends. You would suppose that exposure to minor Saturday and Sunday excursionists like Herr Hitler would have alerted the Foreign Office to the importance of round-the-clock senior manning.

One might also ask how much interest and concern the British authorities had previously shown about Grenada. Max Hastings, in one of the better pieces sparked off by the US intervention, described an earlier *putsch* launched on that island in 1974 by the atrocious Sir Eric Gairy before the formal transfer of sovereignty at Independence. He also described the stolid indifference of the visiting F.O. Minister, Peter Blaker, when the certifiable old loon started setting fire to opposition property (including that of poor Maurice Bishop—at that time, in Hastings' view, a decent if naive left-winger). We don't seem to have cared a bone button.

Now this glacial indifference, this desire to wash hands and get out, fits very ill with our *second* problem—a preoccupation with something called "the Commonwealth." Our Queen is very keen to go on visits, which she takes very seriously, to all parts of the former British Empire. With rare exceptions she is well received and liked in those countries which she calls on; but, with the greatest possible respect, her position (and that of Britain) is as titular as can be. She may be Queen of Grenada. For that matter she is Queen of Uganda and a lot of good it does the Ugandans. Their fate it is to be murdered by relays of psychopathic rulers. She is Queen of a great number of bankrupt, regressive countries, without power or means to do a thing for them.

The attitude of official Britain, give or take a little misapplied financial aid, is one of glacial inactivity combined with an instinct to clutch at the Commonwealth as a sort of regalia. In contrast with the late Maurice Bishop and his "New Jewel" movement, we are preoccupied with old jewels. And when we *have* been involved, it has sometimes been in strange ways. The British export guarantee scheme partly helped to build an airport for "New Jewel" Grenada, with workers from the excellent British firm of Plessey engaged on the same task as the 784 Cuban construction workers (as some of them were). They were building a two-mile-long runway, grandiose as a genuine civil scheme, screamingly obvious in the Central American-Caribbean context as a major military asset for Fidel Ruiz Castro's mobile and helpful troops. No one in Britain appears to have given the strategic provenance of that airport a second thought. But then no one here takes the Cubans seriously. As vital military instruments in a string of African countries as well as in Central America, they might concern us. But official Britain is too busy being insouciant to admit concern about anything. Except, that is, when its own vanity is involved.

We got Grenada wrong partly because we have not focused our mind on Central America, partly because our attitude to the Caribbean has been relaxed to the point of inanition, and partly because we treat "the Commonwealth" with a lot of solemn reverence when it has no powers, legislative, executive, or, in a serious sense, consultative. It is merely a means of inexpensively pretending to live beyond our means.

THE COMMONWEALTH is an outfit hired from theatrical costumiers. It goes with the ceremonial of opening Parliament and Trooping the Colour. It feels good, and it adds up to substantially less than a row of beans. There is a theory going the rounds here (one notably promoted by the shrewd George Gale) that Mrs Thatcher's uncharacteristic

Caribbean Dilemma

HOW many people really understand, or want to understand, the problem?

We considered that a small and extremely violent group of Communists had hi-jacked Grenada and that they had to be stopped as quickly as possible—not only because of the brutal events taking place on the island but because of the threat they posed to the whole Caribbean.

It wasn't the first time we have faced this problem. A few years ago a boatload of men was intercepted on its way to overthrow the Barbados Government. Similar attempts were tried this year against the legitimate Governments of St. Lucia and Dominica.

Many people may not be aware of the closeness of our islands. They are very small; there is a lot of inter-marrying between the islanders and families are spread throughout the Caribbean.

SO WE WERE **deeply shocked when we saw Grenada's leaders and senior politicians as well as innocent women and children being murdered in cold blood. It wasn't just happening in a neighbouring country, but to part of the family. That is the first thing you in Britain have to understand.**

What frightened us all was that it could happen so easily and so quickly. The Marxists just came in and took the island over. It undermined the security of all the islands.

When the United Kingdom was in charge before Independence came, we know we were protected. Knowing that support was no longer there, we asked for help to get rid of the danger.

We knew we hadn't the strength to do it on our own.

We desperately wanted the British to come in and help us because they have been our friends and allies for so long.

We were very disappointed with Her Majesty's Government. We wanted action, not discussion, but London seemed to want to pussyfoot and dillydally around. To wait a month might have been too late. Once the Communists get in they are very difficult to get out.

SO WE HAD TO STOP *the killings and restore democracy. We went to the Americans. They were ready to help at once.*

There is no possibility of the Americans maintaining a peace-keeping force; they will be asked to leave the moment the fighting is over. We will do that job ourselves.

The international criticism of interference with another country is absolute nonsense. People on the other islands are concerned about the safety of their friends and relatives, as well as their own futures. This was a way of securing that.

Dr Claudius Thomas
High Commissioner for Eastern Caribbean States
in the DAILY MAIL (*London*)

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defeatism and her hostility to the US intervention was a bow in the direction of the Palace. The Queen, it is said (and no one can speak with certainty), was violently affronted. The Marines had moved against a Commonwealth country, something which ranks next to spitting in the sacrament. How *dare* they? An admirer of the Monarchy would hope that this supposition is mistaken, for it implies an empty folly on the part of the head of state which could be done without.

Are we to understand that a régime which shoots the Prime Minister with a hand-held rocket, clubs to death his Minister of Education, Jacqueline Creft, murders four other members of the Cabinet, and then fires indiscriminately on a crowd friendly to Mr Bishop, is for reasons of sequential protocol and the touchiness of the highly born, preferable to an American intervention which Grenadians show every sign of wanting and approving? Such paternalism, to mind so little the condition of offspring!

We have to come to terms with the fact that the Commonwealth represents a vainglorious, futile delusion. It achieves nothing except the provision of post-Imperial self-solace. It takes the Prime Minister of-the-day to a regular session called the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Con-

Europe, the US and Grenada

PUBLIC REACTION **in the United States to President Reagan's invasion of Grenada has been overwhelmingly favourable. A Washington Post-ABC poll, taken the day after the invasion, came out 52% for to 37% against. By last Friday, when it was clear that the U.S. action was succeeding, 65% of those polled were on board, and only 27% were against.**

What this suggests is that a U.S. victory against Communist expansionism, even a small victory, was what Americans mainly needed to cure themselves of the remaining fears and uncertainties left over from the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. A preponderance of Americans obviously still believe that the U.S. government is justified in using force to defend individual freedom, democracy and self-determination against totalitarian imperialism. It is even more certain, from the post-invasion reaction, that peoples of the Eastern Caribbean think so and now consider the U.S. military their principal friend and protector.

There is, however, a surprising disconnection between this Western Hemisphere reaction and that of Western Europe's leadership elites. None of the NATO allies voted with the U.S. against a United Nations resolution "deploring" the invasion. Indeed, no one did except El Salvador, Israel and the Caribbean allies.

What is going on here?

WE'RE NOT SURE *we have all the answers but we suspect that it is largely a matter of Europe's political consciousness having lagged well behind changes in public attitudes in the U.S. That is not surprising considering the fact that Europeans derive many of their attitudes from American elites—some elements of the news media, for example—who are themselves out of touch with popular attitudes in the U.S. and in other parts of the Western Hemisphere. After the invasion, some Western reporters searched initially for the condemnation they fully expected only to have to reverse themselves later and report exactly the opposite. Some European opinion makers—in "Le Monde", for example—now are belatedly swinging towards the U.S. as well.*

IF THAT IS HAPPENING, **it is about time. European sophisticates were much titillated when the Vietnam defeat proved that the Americans also could be shown to have feet of clay. The U.S. could no longer claim moral superiority over a Europe that had embroiled itself in ghastly wars, revolutions and crimes against humanity during this century. Communist propagandists fed this easily understood emotion generously with exaggerations of the evils committed by U.S. troops and the dreaded Central Intelligence Agency. Because this concept has meant so much to the restoration of Europe's self-image it has not been easy for Europe to give it up.**

And more recently it has been fed once more by the propaganda of the Left that depicts U.S. involvement in Central America as a heinous defence of oligarchs and tyrants, notwithstanding a U.S.-sponsored land reform in El Salvador and the U.S. role in the overthrow of Somoza.

AND SO WE HAVE HAD *the irony of European anti-communists actually assisting the penetration of the Western Hemisphere by the Soviet Union. In Grenada, shockingly enough, the European Community was helping foot the bill for that huge new airfield that was to have accommodated Cuban military aircraft supplying Cuban troops in Angola and threatening the eastern entrance to the Caribbean. A British construction firm was helping build this base and, unbelievably, the British government had provided subsidized credits. We can only try to be generous and charge this off to naivete. Sir Paul Scoon, Queen Elizabeth's governor general in Grenada, knows all about European sophistication and so didn't bother to ask Britain to help with the liberation.*

Even though there can no longer be any doubt that Nicaragua's Sandinistas are Marxist-Leninist affiliates of the Soviet enterprise, Western Europe still provides them with more aid than the U.S. delivers to their beleaguered victims in El Salvador. Just this week, Holland gave Nicaragua $2 million for highway construction.

TWO DAYS AGO **in this space we noted the 20th anniversary of the fall of Diem, and the lesson we should all finally learn: Treat your enemies as enemies and your friends as friends. That lesson should be etched into the concrete walls of NATO headquarters in Brussels.**

Folks who need a refresher on what the West's enemies have planned should have a look at the current issue of ENCOUNTER, a British magazine. It includes a lengthy discussion between Jeane Kirkpatrick, the U.S. representative to the United Nations, and George Urban. . . .

Mr Urban argues that we are more at war than at peace with the Soviets. "Peace for them is," he says, "in the favourite Marxian quote à la Clausewitz, the continuation of war by other means." And where they think they can get away with the continuation of war by war, they will, as the militarization of the Caribbean shows. "If the West European public or certain West European governments permit themselves to feel that détente signifies the end of a deadly serious rivalry between the Soviet and the Western systems," says Mrs. Kirkpatrick, "they are basing their security on illusion."

The twice-liberated European allies who are bad-mouthing the U.S. for liberating a small island may want to reconsider. Quite possibly, the Old World needs to look more carefully at how the U.S. public has reacted and make some revision of its ideas on what's the done thing and what's not.

Leading Editorial Article
in the WALL STREET JOURNAL

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ference where he, or she, will endure the moral strictures of such strict liberal constitutionalists as Mrs Indira Gandhi and such economic high-flyers as Mr Julius Nyerere. It is like getting a pain in an amputated leg, but it evidently makes the half-real world of courtiers and ceremonialists a better place. If the Commonwealth were abolished tomorrow, or rather if Britain quietly gave in her cards, it would have an effect only upon those people who dress up and play nursery games. We need some reality. There is power and not-power. Nothing lies in between. It is the delusion of courts to pretend otherwise, to go on with an empire under another name, when the thing itself has vanished from the face of the earth and all one can substitute is a little huddled, fearful goodwill, rationed for ceremonial occasions only. In Queen Elizabeth's Commonwealth "we consecrate the flicker not the flame."

There is an intelligent case, though one not easily pursued, for saying that we the British should have pursued our dismissal of Empire at a much slower pace. And the foolish doctrinaire anti-Imperialism of certain Americans, notably Franklin Roosevelt, was as ignorant in its way of the consequences for some unlucky countries as the grand European dismissal of Castroism and Central American problems.

There are a number of small Commonwealth territories without the roads, the schools, the raw materials, or the organisation of state ever to be truly independent. Deference to the sacred temple of abstract principles at the United Nations (another conspicuous farce), combined with a desire to have done with entanglements which some might see as obligations, has caused us positively to push certain unstable micro-states into a nationhood they did not wish. This is no time for the ritual handwasher to start a tantrum about the President's intrusion into a world we have abandoned for every purpose except that of palace toy.

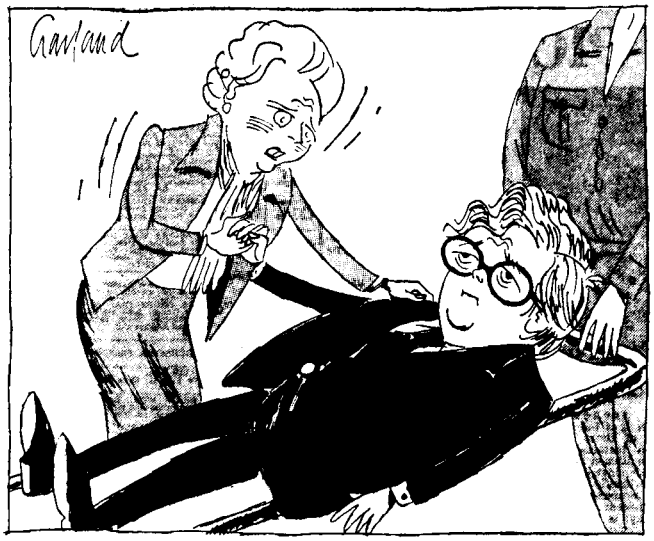
"High intelligence can be invested in ignorance if the need for illusion is deep. . . ."

The Commonwealth, which is a fraudulent structure, is part of that ignorance if we believe in it. The indifference to what goes on, which countries could fall to sharp little *putsches*, is another part. Such attitudes are not shared on the spot. Embarrassingly for those who want to denounce him, Mr Reagan had the ardent support of all the neighbouring East Caribbean islands except Trinidad. And while we are about it, if the British Foreign Office, as represented by its embassy in the United States, had so much as watched the television news on the day after the Coard-Austin putsch, they would have seen the formidable Tom Adams of Barbados dropping hints all round the screen that if somebody were to make a military move his government, among others, would welcome it. Was this interview reported? Was Sir Geoffrey Howe shown a transcript? Whatever telegrams diplomats may dispatch, here was a direct, obvious, and public channel available on the East Coast, and seen by this writer in his New York hotel bedroom. It doesn't inherently matter that we were dozy or slow-minded on this one occasion if one did not see in such indifference a wide and more general lassitude.

The snobbish ignorance of senior British columnists, reinforced by the *Financial Times* and *The Times* (rescued late in the week by a returning and clearly displeased Charles Douglas-Home, the Editor) are all bad accents to hear from influential voices. The grotesque conduct of the Labour Party is something we are resigned to, but the others are Establishment voices, piqued, affronted, and hideously parochial, onlookers seeing nothing of the game and hugging their petty resentments close.

As we go into the year-of-the-missiles for which we asked and against which we now protest, the opportunities for soft-spoken persons like Mr Arbatov to flatter the West, and play the card of anti-Americanism, look better than they have any business to. We have, alas, both a superiority complex and a British Commonwealth. It would be wise to be rid of them both.

SOME ONE WILL NO DOUBT OBJECT that the Plessey building scheme was proof of our "sincere concern" for Grenada. Which leaves one asking again what kind of political sensitivity is it which provides a two-mile runway for a Marxist government known to be on good close terms with the local Soviet client-state? But aren't the Cubans, like Thurber's seal in the bedroom, only an American neurosis? Serious concern that they might go on elsewhere—to other West Indian islands or to Central America—is strictly for those "paranoid Americans" whom Mr Walden chides and Mr Alexander pities. Yet the Cubans have rocked around the clock in Africa. They have functioned as a mercenary state hired to fight, with expeditionary forces, the Soviet Union's colonial wars and do her dying at second hand. The dreadful bewhoring of his own people by Fidel Castro, the tribute of Cuba's young men, like those killed for a Soviet purpose in Angola, receives no response in passive, complacent Europe. We make patronising and dismissive remarks about the poor, backward, and strategic countries of the world. But then "the world forgetting by the world forgot" seems to be the guiding substitute for a public view of faraway countries. In Saul Bellow's words,



The Prime Minister greeting the wounded from Grenada
Sunday Telegraph (London)

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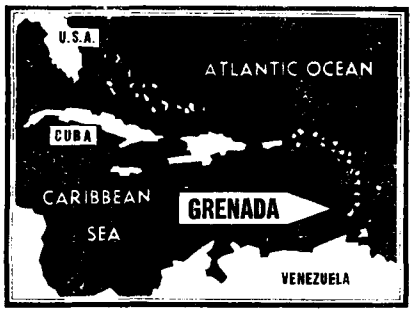
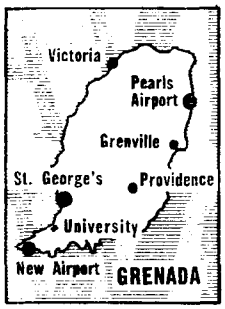
Grenada & the Noble Lords

Voices in an Island Storm





LORD GLADWYN: We are discovering, rather belatedly, that the American Administration has a very different idea of how best to conduct the continuing struggle with a vast totalitarian superpower (which is commonly and accurately known as the Cold War) from that which until now, broadly speaking, has been accepted by the other members of the North Atlantic Alliance.

The point is well brought out by a long and absorbing dialogue in the latest number of the magazine ENCOUNTER, between George Urban, an intellectual standing slightly to the Right of Solzhenitsyn, and Jeane Kirkpatrick, the highly intelligent, if not controversial, American representative on the United Nations Security Council, who probably knows more abut the Cold War than most. From this long dialogue, which I urge noble Lords to read if they are interested in the subject, we gather that the West must abandon all idea of, as it were, "taming" the Soviet régime; that is to say, by so operating *détente* as to achieve a sort of "Westernising" of the Soviet Union with which a deal might eventually be made. On the contrary, all means short of an actual fighting war should be employed in order to weaken the Soviet régime, and nothing whatever should be done to strengthen it, this principle applying more especially, of course, to economic assistance. Naturally, too, all spontaneous resistance to Soviet domination, whether in the Union itself or in the satellites, should be actively encouraged, though not to the point of actually offering military help.

IT FOLLOWS that, short of provoking war—and on this point Jeane Kirkpatrick is, happily, most insistent—all possible measures designed to weaken the Soviet Union and its satellites should be taken, more especially—and this is the point—in Central and South America where any frankly pro-Soviet régimes must, if possible, be, as it were, immunised or at least rendered incapable of harming the United States in what must be regarded by the Europeans as an American sphere of interest. It is also argued that, while "democratic" régimes are by far the best, "authoritarian" Governments may well have to be tolerated, seeing that, however repressive, they are at least far preferable to "totalitarian" ones.

WELL, if this is the general policy of the Reagan Administration, and there is much evidence to show that it is, what are the European members of the North Atlantic Treaty going to do about it?

*

LORD ANNAN: It seems to me that we have to be very careful when talking about principles in foreign policy. Foreign policy ultimately is about power. Principles are fine guidelines provided that you remember that in foreign policy they bear the same relation as proverbs do to morals. If you want to describe morality and what you should do, you can cite

THESE *excerpts are taken from Hansard Parliamentary records, (vol. 444, no. 26) of the debate on Grenada in the House of Lords on 1 November 1983.*

The dramatis personae are:

Lord Gladwyn: *former British Ambassador to Paris and to the U.N. (as Sir Gladwyn Jebb).*

Lord Annan: *author, educator, and frequent contributor to* ENCOUNTER *(as Noël Annan), former Provost of King's College, Cambridge, given a life peerage by the Harold Wilson Labour Government.*

The Earl of Kimberley: *ex-Liberal now on Tory benches, Etonian and Grenadier Guardsman.*

Lord Kennet: *Social Democrat spokesman, author (as Wayland Young) of many books and articles (including "Sitting on a Fortune" in* ENCOUNTER*).*

Lord Home of the Hirsel: *former Conservative Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary (as Sir Alex Douglas-Home).*

Lord Jenkins of Putney: *as Hugh Jenkins a left-wing Labour M.P. who served as Minister of Culture & the Arts in the Callaghan government.*

Lord Stewart of Fulham: *Labour Foreign Secretary (as Michael Stewart) in the Wilson Cabinet.*

Lord Soames: *Tory spokesman, Churchill's son-in-law, former European High Commissioner in Brussels.*

Lord Greenhill of Harrow: *former head of the British Foreign Office.*

Lord Hankey: *retired British diplomat, former Ambassador to European organisations (OEEC, OECD).*

Lord Thomas of Swynnerton: *author (as Hugh Thomas) of studies of the Spanish Civil War & Cuban history, and a biography of John Strachey; now an adviser to the Thatcher Government.*

Lord Beloff: *author and scholar, frequent contributor to* ENCOUNTER *(as Max Beloff), former Professor of Government at Oxford and founder of the University College at Buckingham.*

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numbers of admirable proverbs; the trouble is that every proverb you cite always has an opposite proverb that is equally true: "Many hands make light work" and "Too many cooks spoil the broth." Principles in foreign policy can often lead you astray.

IT SEEMS TO ME that it is no good us taking a "holier than thou" line on this matter. In the days when we were the leading power in the world we reacted in exactly that way. Indeed, we did so in the time of Lord Palmerston. If people say, "Oh, but surely we have moved on from the 19th century" I would say to them that in foreign policy you never move on; it is always the same problem of the relation of power of one country to another.

I have great sympathy with the Prime Minister's dilemma. When this happened she was obviously in very great difficulty. I personally wish, as I think the noble Lord, Lord Home, said, that she had come down slightly on the other side in saying that we regretted that we could do nothing very much to help, but we understood the American anxiety in this matter.

Subversion in the Caribbean is a fact. The Cuban foreign policy is the policy of an imperialist power. Where are Cuban troops to be found? They are in four African countries. All through the Caribbean Cuban influence is concerned with trying to establish bases to subvert the régimes in different countries.

THE THING TO DO now is to mend our fences as soon as possible because in American politics—and one must never forget this—in the politics of the Republican party and the Democratic party, it is how you treat your friends which is remembered, and how you treat your friends in time of adversity; that is what is remembered in American politics. There are people in America who will have sore memories of what they did when we were in trouble over the Falklands. It was very much in their interests, as Jeane Kirkpatrick said, for the Americans to have rather shrugged off the British affair as a piece of old-fashioned British imperialism. However, they did something very much against some of their best interests when they supported us, I hope that we shall give good evidence in the months to come that we are prepared now to support them.

*

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: As a result of the liberation of Grenada it will have free elections and become a fully democratic country. I ask whether Grenada needed a civil airport at Point Salines—where I have been—with a 10,000 ft. runway for tourism. We have only three airfields in the whole of this country with such runways. It cannot possibly have been necessary. It was ostensibly built as a civil airport, but any of the Iron Curtain heavy transport aeroplanes flying direct from Moscow could operate in and out of it.

Lord Kennet: My Lords, can the noble Lord say why Grenada has any less right to a jumbo jet length runway than Martinique, Antigua, St Lucia, Barbados or Trinidad, which have one?

The Earl of Kimberley: My Lords, I will happily tell the noble Lord, Lord Kennet, that none of them has a runway of 10,000 feet. The longest is 8,500 feet.

Lord Kennet: My Lords, it is 9,000 feet, not 10,000 feet. According to the testimony of Messrs. Plessey (the British construction company), who are in charge of the contract, it is 9,000 feet, not 10,000 feet.

The Earl of Kimberley: My Lords, why split hairs? they still do not need one of 9,000 feet.

*

LORD HOME OF THE HIRSEL: No rule can be absolute. It so happened that in the year that I was Prime Minister there was a political revolt against Mr Nyerere in Tanzania within days of the hand-over of power from this country to that Government. Technically, to intervene from this country would have been to flout the United Nations rules. I had to consider the matter and I authorised the despatch of units of the British Army in order to save that situation and to restore the Government of Mr Nyerere to office. That could of course have been interpreted in the way in which I have described, but I think that it was necessary to take that action because within a short time—indeed, I think, within four days—the whole of the arrangements between ourselves and the transfer of power could have been put at nought and an alien régime would have come to power.

NO TWO CASES are alike. The appeals of two responsible Commonwealth countries like Jamaica and Barbados were no doubt weighty considerations in favour of Britain's association with their action and that of the United States when they went into Grenada.

Nobody seems to have appreciated the vital importance of the Caribbean area to the Western world; it is a very important strategic area. I confess that I would have been very much happier if the Government had decided to support Jamaica, Barbados and the United States in the Council of the United Nations.

When a world power like Russia subverts and overbears and does not play to the rules, then sooner or later a potential political victim—remembering that the worm will turn—will have had enough and will resist as, indeed, the Poles have done. Inevitably those countries that have the power—such as the United States and the European countries—will have to face the question whether to intervene and save sovereignty and law and order. The consideration of which they will have to take note as they make those decisions is whether, if they do nothing, democracy will not lose all along the line and the epitaph may well be written of the free world, the two words, "too late".

*

LORD JENKINS OF PUTNEY: In the situation in what we used to call "Grenarda", but which now we have to call "Grenayda", why have the Government not had the courage

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to put down a Motion disapproving the American action? Then those who feel that the Americans are always right, and who would still think the Americans right if they decided to blow the world to pieces, would be exposed as the minority they really are in this country.

THE ANTI-COMMUNISM of some people is almost irrational. It has certainly reached that stage in the case of President Reagan and some of his entourage. On these matters, the President almost seems to have the hallmarks of paranoia. For if Grenada can be invaded, what can save Nicaragua? And who will be next on the list after that?

THE GOVERNMENT SAY that President Reagan and his men may be crazy in the Caribbean—may lie, cheat and murder there—but can nevertheless be trusted with the fate of the British people in their operational control of cruise missiles. Like Hamlet, the President is only mad north-west; in the south, he knows a hawk from a handsaw—except that in this case it is the other way about. According to the Government, President Reagan may be slightly off his head in the south-west, but is absolutely sane in the North Atlantic.

THE FINAL CREW controlling cruise missiles in Britain may both be Americans, both under the orders of a man whose grasp of his marbles sometimes seems to be precarious: for as the noble and learned Lord, the Lord Chancellor might have perhaps put it more eloquently, President Reagan sometimes seems to be "stark staring bonkers." If the Government will not learn the lesson of Grenada and are determined to allow the Americans to have operational control over cruise missiles, then we should all get a copy of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society's booklet on safe methods of suicide and leave this earth at a time of our own choosing rather than leave it to President Reagan to decide when we go.

*

LORD STEWART OF FULHAM: What do the Grenadians think about it? All the evidence at present is that they are delighted that the American invasion occurred. They are not standing up and demanding the speedy disappearance of the American troops. We have got to take this into account because if we come to the conclusion that, on balance, the United States action was wrong, we will tend to look rather absurd if we go on insisting on that point against the clear wishes of the Grenadians in that matter. If the Soviet Union could produce large groups of Afghans rejoicing over the arrival of Russian troops in their country—or Poles or Czechs—we should have to take a different view of their action. I say that this matter of the attitude of the Grenadians is something that we are bound to take into account.

*

LORD KENNET: The action of the United States carried many mistakes with it. The arguments advanced have been manifold. First, there is the "back yard" argument. Well, some back yard! Mr Denis Healey had good fun with that in the House of Commons yesterday and said that the distance from Florida to Grenada is the same as the distance from Britain to Suez. That is not quite true, although it is nearly true. I should like to tell the House what our back yard is if defined by a radius of 1, 500 miles, which is the distance of Grenada from Florida. It starts at the North Pole and goes down the middle of the Kara Sea, off Soviet Siberia. Thence it passes well to the east of Moscow. It includes the Sea of Azov. It goes outside Istanbul to a point in the central Sahara; south of the Canary Islands, across the Atlantic almost to Newfoundland and, via Baffin Island, up to the North Pole again. That is our back yard. The Soviet Union's back yard includes (besides ourselves and France) the whole of the Middle East, the whole of the Gulf, the Red Sea down to Ethiopia, India and the whole of British Columbia. It is also interesting to note that Cuba is one-tenth of the distance Grenada is from the United States and about one-tenth of the distance Grenada is from Central America. So much for the back yard.

*

LORD SOAMES: I suspect the most important anxiety in the minds of Her Majesty's Government was evidently the extent to which they saw American action in Grenada as flouting international law. Certainly we will not find within the United

"Where else can we send them?"

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Nations charter a paragraph giving blanket approval to military action in a Grenada-type situation, where a foreign military presence is not invited by the legal Government of a country. But where was the legal government of the country? I wonder what authority within Grenada could have put the United States in the situation where it was acting within the United Nations Charter. There was no legal Government. The place was in turmoil after a *coup* by the extreme Left resulting in the murder of the Prime Minister and others of his Ministers. The People's Revolutionary Government had been deposed and had been replaced, apparently, by a revolutionary military authority. Why, I wonder? I do not know, but I do not believe that it was because the People's Revolutionary Government were going too far to the Left and becoming too friendly with Cuba or the USSR.

Furthermore, we know that the Governments of nearby islands were greatly scared by the turn of events and wanted the Americans to intervene to restore normality without delay. We also know that the Governor General himself (for he has told us) sought help from outside; and the views from Grenadians that we have heard so far seem to show that the vast majority of the people of the island were much relieved when the Americans arrived. Fear, chaos and anarchy reigned. In those circumstances, who could have asked for intervention if it was not the Governor General, on the one hand, and the Governments of nearby islands, also within the Commonwealth, on the other?

MIGHT IT NOT have been wiser in this situation for Her Majesty's Government to have given the United States the benefit of the doubt? Were we really sure enough at the time that we were right to oppose that action in the public forum of the United Nations? Furthermore, was it not a possibility, to say the least, that those who engineered this *coup* might have been ready and willing to cooperate in turning the island into a military base threatening the United States? If the United States had not responded to the requests of the Governor General and other Governments in the area at the time, and if in a few months a major arms build-up in Grenada had become evident, would that not have created a much more serious situation for the whole world—a sort of second Cuban missile crisis, with its risk of major confrontation? I cannot help feeling that if it were necessary to be done it were necessary that it be done quickly.

*

LORD GREENHILL OF HARROW: What risk did the Grenadian régime pose to the largely defenceless Commonwealth neighbours? It is perfectly clear that their alarm about the military junta and its Cuban and Russian friends was genuine enough. Responsible leaders like Mr Adams and Mr Seaga were in no doubt and, after mutual consultation, sought help from outside. Who are we to tell them that their fears were misplaced?

WHAT RISK or what threat, if any, was posed to the United States? It is hard to distinguish between a real and an imagined threat, and foreign policy is, in part, made up by historical memories. The Cuban missile crisis in 1962 seems to be a forgotten episode here, but it is not so in the United States. There were plenty of people here at that time who said that Russian activity in Cuba was nothing to fuss about and the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union denied in Washington that missiles were there. This is all passed over by their apologists now. These events have created a climate of opinion in the United States which may not be shared here, but it is in the minds of all US policy-makers whoever their President may be.

IT SEEMS TO ME largely immaterial whether the Cubans or the Russians were in Grenada at the invitation of the Government. Maybe there was an invitation, but when does an invitation from an unrepresentative group who have seized power by force inhibit neighbouring Governments from taking action to protect themselves? For this reason, I conclude that the steps taken by certain Caribbean countries and the United States were, in the light of all the circumstances, reasonable and should be acknowledged as such.

*

LORD HANKEY: I wonder how many of your Lordships saw *Panorama* last night. I was very shocked by it because they were leaning over backwards to put the Americans in the cart, really leaning over backwards—rather what you would expect from *Panorama* who are a bunch of Leftists. The *Panorama* representative was interviewing the Governor General, for whom I have the greatest admiration, may I say. He actually had the cheek, the unspeakable nerve, to say to him, "Have you not replaced one set of thugs with another set of thugs?" How desirable is it that such a very distinguished outfit as the BBC should carry out a gross slander of that sort on our principal allies? I really think it is a disgrace.

*

LORD THOMAS OF SWYNNERTON: Who can recall that,

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in a greater Caribbean crisis, in 1962, the Government of President Kennedy sent Mr Acheson to inform European Governments as to what was likely to happen. The whole incident seems to me to give weight to my suspicion that the more elaborate the technology and the quicker the means of communication by telephone or telex, the less satisfactory the actual means of communication turns out to be. I look forward therefore to a revival of the letter, and of the personal visit.

THE MAIN CHANGE in the Soviet world over the past generation has been that in addition to the assistance it can expect to receive from Communist parties abroad, the Soviet Union now has at its disposal in one form or another, linked to it in one form or another, a great number of surrogate states, Cuba being the obvious one in the first place, but Viet Nam, South Yemen, and perhaps Nicaragua also play a part. This must affect our judgment as to what should have been done or was done. But, of course, had Grenada simply been a conventional Communist state, like, say, Kerala in India, as it once was, or even like Hungary, which does not threaten anyone very much, there would have been naturally no case whatever for the United States to intervene.

Indeed, I do not suppose for a second that they would have thought of doing so. But the fact is that Grenada was progressively being turned by the Cubans—presumably at the Soviet behest—into a headquarters for terrorism and therefore guerrilla war and wars of liberation, as the Cubans refer to them, which could easily have affected the whole of the Eastern Caribbean and the North of South America, too. Dr Castro and all Soviet leaders have made no bones about the fact that one of their main aims in the Third World is to give support to wars of liberation wherever these may be successful.

Certainly Dr Castro, in referring to the death of the Cubans in the first attack, talked of the Cubans dying for their country. Which country? Why were they there?

It is my considered belief that the United States was justified in the action which it took.

We should bear in mind that the collapse of the Marxist-Leninist régime in Grenada is the first collapse of a régime of this sort in history. None of the other setbacks to the Soviet empire have had anything like the same resonance. Some states managed by the Soviet Union, directly or indirectly, have certainly collapsed but none when they have begun to play such an important part in aggrandisement in the Third World.

*

LORD BELOFF: It seems to me—and there are here, I fear, parallels with the Falklands crisis which we were debating not so long ago—that we appear to regard foreign affairs as a series of discontinuous events which suddenly happen and demand a reaction which we may, either militarily or economically or diplomatically, find it difficult to make up our minds about. After all, the problem presented by a possible hostile base in Grenada has been familiar ground for many years.

I do not know how many people noticed a small paragraph in *The Times* which pointed out that the Government of Surinam, which was also a Left-wing dictatorship that had come to power by violence, had just sent 100 Cubans back to Cuba. Perhaps the dictator in Surinam was getting a bit worried about what had happened to Mr. Bishop not so far away.

THERE HAS been a great deal of talk of the law. It is true that the governing principle of international law in respect of matters of this kind is the principle of non-intervention. The difficulty is, as Talleyrand pointed out a long time ago, that non-intervention is only another way of saying "intervention." That is for this reason: you have to decide at what point intervention of an apparently peaceful or quasi-peaceful kind becomes intervention in the ordinary sense of the word and at that stage it can be met only by counter-force.

International law may well at present say that what we think about intervention—and let us not take the huge states—in, let us say, Portugal or Belgium is exactly the same as intervention would be in, for example, Grenada or in a number of independent states in the world which are even smaller than Grenada. If that is the view of international law then international law is an ass and should be revised, because it is perfectly clear that there is a point at which a state is so small that it can be taken over by force not merely, as in the case of Grenada, by people professing a particular political doctrine but even by a group of common law criminals.

There are, for instance, islands in the West Indies which are largely already under the control or partial control of persons who use them for the large-scale smuggling of narcotics. One cannot take the view that any country, however small, is in a way given a total immunity, because if one does that one is really opening the way to intervention on a massive scale. Either, politically, we shall have to find a way of bringing small states under proper protection with each other or with larger neighbours or, alternatively, we shall have to say that in their case we cannot accept their total sovereign being.

IF WE SAY "totally" that we, the British, believe—and indeed the Prime Minister came very close to saying this in her radio broadcast—that there are no possible circumstances in which the intervention of a power, even a friendly power, into the affairs of another country is justified, then I fear we are committing the error (which is now acknowledged, I think, very generally) by the late Dean Acheson when Secretary of State of the United States, of making a speech describing America's vital interests and leaving out South Korea. Many people hold that that was one, though not the only one, of the precipitating factors which led the North Koreans and their backers to believe that the United States would not resist aggression across that parallel.

It is very important that we preserve to ourselves within the limits of international law where that can be acceptably stated, the freedom to act and the freedom, where necessary, of our allies to act, in defence of our own vital interests.

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Paul Groves

Eric and Maiden

WILL GIRL TRAVELLING *on 12.30*
Paddington-West Country Wed. Aug. 8
and reading New Poetry *please contact*
Eric (fellow traveller with whom she
discussed poetry as far as Taunton).
Box SA7, *New Poetry*

A whistle. The slam of a door.
Passengers shuffling through
with heavy cases. Platforms on either side
of an earthbound, wingless plane.

Movement, smooth as cream poured
into coffee. Settle back. Watch faces
flit away, as if you could shoot any
without it making much difference.

Sky. Dormer windows. Cars at a traffic
light. A landmark four miles off. A headquarters.
An expensive jet stacking for Heathrow.
More light. Look at your fellow-travellers.

Old, reading a Mills and Boon. A child
with glazed eyes, expecting to be bored;
its no-nonsense mum unwrapping a sweet.
And someone reading *New Poetry*. Dear God.

Eric's palms moisten. She is beautiful
and has a mind. She is all faculties
and loose-leaf files, Shakespeare
and Thom Gunn. Has to be.

"Er, I'm Eric. . . . " It took an age to say.
It took Reading to say. "And I like poetry too.
Look. I have the same magazine,
the same issue." "Let's discuss poetry",

she says. "Who knows: perhaps to Taunton."
Dear God. "Page 32?" "Page 32."
That invisible medium called
The Same Wavelength stretches between them.

By Newbury, it's the heavy-petting of Rilke,
the heavy-breathing of Schiller, the name-dropping
of Walt Whitman and Ivor Cutler.
Their polymathy knows no bounds.

The Vale of Pewsey glides past
in iambic pentameter. High clouds allow
azure caesuras to punctuate their being.
They zip through Wiltshire, and summer explodes

like Emily Dickinson smoking
a trick cigar. Hey, Eric—cut

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the Group chat, and ask her name.
But all he says is Philip Hobsbaum.

Eric, who is she? Find out before
it's too late. The fool. He's even asking her
to spell Zulfikar Ghose. Already
the rest of the carriage has ceased to exist.

Taunton falls like a guillotine.
It is mid-afternoon, and the race is run.
Lifetimes have been lived, continents traversed
in their honest talk, their soul-baring.

She gets up. She takes his hand.
What does he say? He is flustered and proud
equally. The gods dictate he must stay on board.
He curses Exeter.

She gathers speed on the moving platform
and is plucked from sight. He settles back
with a suddenly jejune copy of *New Poetry*
and eyes the space she occupied.

Edward Lowbury

Behind The Curtain

(To K.N.)

You chose well, sending me that postcard
Of a sad child's face, Wyspianski's painting.
To remind me how you are trapped
In a paradise where it is hard
To smile, impertinent to sing.

Too beautiful to be ditched or tucked away
In a cupboard and soon forgotten, the card stands
Long after Christmas on a shelf
Where, twenty times a day,
It catches, lacerates my glance.

Involuntarily I smile, but the child returns
No answering smile. You chose well—this precious
Card to remind me how helpless
I've been. Your heart burns
To escape; I send "Good wishes."

But insidiously that child's face dislodges
My memory of yours, becomes your face,
And in a sense you're here:
I could imagine your wishes
Granted, mine more than just a phrase,

And smile, involuntarily, as though I'd won
Your battle, set you free. . . . Now I'll take down
The sad child; set in its place
A smiling simpleton
To help me exorcise your frown.

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A Question of Survival

New Plays & Playwrights—By JOHN SPURLING

SOME FRIENDS living in Devon were visited recently by a travelling storyteller. Was he in a horse-drawn caravan? I may have imagined that. The survival of live or, as it were, horse-drawn theatre into 1984 and the electronic age seems equally quaint—an evolutionary wrinkle which will surely be ironed out before the world is much older. Yet it looked the same to Strindberg nearly a century ago:

> "Theatre has long seemed to me—in common with much other art—a *Biblia Pauperum*, a Bible in pictures for those who cannot read what is written or printed; and I see the playwright as a lay preacher peddling the ideas of his time in popular form, popular enough for the middle classes, mainstay of theatre audiences, to grasp the gist of the matter without troubling their brains too much. For this reason theatre has always been an elementary school for the young, the semi-educated, and for women who still have a primitive capacity for deceiving themselves and letting themselves be deceived—who, that is to say, are susceptible to illusion and to suggestion from the author. I have therefore thought it not unlikely that in these days, when that rudimentary and immature thought process operating through fantasy appears to be developing into reflection, research, and analysis, that theatre, like religion, might be discarded as an outworn form for whose appreciation we lack the necessary conditions."

Strindberg recognised that attempts were being made in his own time to up-date the content of drama without altering its old forms, but he thought these were doomed to failure by the "applauding or hissing majority." What he did not foresee was the invincible determination of a few people in every generation to renew the theatre, to keep pouring new wine into old bottles and even occasionally to change the design of the bottles. The result has been gradually to achieve what—because of the instantaneous nature of reaction in the theatre—seemed to Strindberg impossible: *retrospectively* to transform the hissing majority into an applauding one. So that, still without troubling their brains too much—or their political or social sensitivities—theatre audiences have found themselves able to accept and even relish the innovations and outrages of the past. Ibsen, Chekhov, Shaw, Strindberg himself have long since changed status from shibboleths to golden oldies, and we can already see the same process at work on Brecht and Beckett. In other words, reflection, research and analysis are not intrinsically alien to the theatre's still overwhelmingly middle-class patrons; but they need to be distanced a bit and slightly misted over with the nostalgia and unreality of a vanished era.

On the other hand, Strindberg was also wrong in supposing that the immediately popular aspect of theatre—its "rudimentary and immature thought process operating through fantasy"—would become obsolete in a scientific age. Although it is precisely the "Bible in pictures" side which has been taken over by film and television (with their by-no-means exclusively middle-class audiences), that side is still valued in the live theatre. In fact, apart from revivals of Shakespeare and other antique classics, the present-day theatre often seems to consist almost entirely of new plays which ought to be hissed for their vapidity and old plays which were once hissed for not being vapid enough; and in both areas it is in direct competition with television and video. So why does theatre survive?

Partly because theatre-going is a social habit which has not yet been discarded; partly because we like museums and value the art of the past; and partly because of the determination of the few. "The theatres", said Lorca, who was one of the few, "are full of deceiving sirens, garlanded with hothouse roses, and the public is content, and applauds dummy hearts and superficial dialogue"; hence "the theatre must impose itself on the public, not the public on the theatre." But why should it impose itself? Why should it survive if it is not sufficiently popular? Why should it have to be regularly kicked and pummelled into life again every time it lies down for its last sleep in the comfortable arms of the undemanding? Lorca is in no doubt of the answer:

> "The theatre is one of the most useful and expressive instruments for a country's edification, the barometer which registers its greatness or its decline. . . . A nation which does not help and does not encourage its theatre is, if not dead, dying; just as the theatre which does not feel the social pulse, the historical pulse, the drama of its people, and catch the genuine colour of its landscape and of its spirit, with laughter or with tears, has no right to call itself a theatre, but an amusement hall, or a place for doing that dreadful thing known as 'killing time'."

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Ernst Toller, answering his own question—"Can art influence reality?"—replies that it can:

> "Art reaches further than reason, it firmly establishes the emotion. It supplies the established emotion with rational legitimacy. I believe, therefore, that the artist should not prove a thesis but create examples. Art belongs among those rare spiritual means of stirring up buried instincts, of training brave attitudes, of deepening spontaneous feeling for humanity, freedom, and beauty."

And Brecht, in the same spirit, remarks that "like the transformation of nature, that of society is a liberating act; and it is the joys of liberation which the theatre of a scientific age has got to convey."[1]

THESE ARE ALL, OF COURSE, socialist writers; but when one glances back over the theatrical history of the past hundred years or so one can see that, though individual writers and directors have made their contributions, carried out their personal reforms of form or content or both, the most significant changes in the theatre have all been connected to changes in society, whether actual or hoped for, and have been pushed through by socially-conscious groups.

The theatre's survival, therefore, has been intimately bound up with its usefulness as a forum, an outlet for protest and questioning, a centre for disaffection and disillusionment with things as they are. And if this seems an extreme view, even an untenable one to all those lovers of the theatre, professional and amateur, for whom it is primarily a place of rather old-fashioned entertainment where you can see stars in the flesh and leave the real world outside, that is probably because the constantly tottering, raddled, but infinitely resourceful world of commercial show business has been so quick to lean on the vigorous young shoulder of protest that its subversive intentions have been partly muffled and diverted.

To speak of protest, subversion, disaffection, though, is to project a negative image. Better to call it, as Peter Hall does in his foreword to Michel Saint-Denis' *Training for the Theatre*,[2] "the responsibility of the theatre." Saint-Denis, actor, director and teacher, was certainly one of the determined few to whom the theatre in Britain, France, Canada and the United States partly owes its survival. Beginning with his famously innovative uncle, Jacques Copeau, in the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier in 1920, Saint-Denis became director of the experimental Compagnie des Quinzes in the early 1930s, then in 1936, with George Devine, Glen Byam Shaw and others, started the London Theatre Studio for the training of actors. After the War he founded successively the Old Vic Theatre Centre, the National Theatre School of Canada, and the Juilliard School Drama Division in New York; in 1962 he became, with Peter Hall and Peter Brook, one of the three directors of the Royal Shakespeare Company. "It was from these years with Michel", writes Hall, "that I began to understand the responsibility of the theatre. If you invite an audience to surrender two or three hours of their lives to you, you must offer something considerable in return." Saint-Denis himself speaks of "authenticity", "reality", "communion with the play; communion between man and man", and his efforts as a director were chiefly focused on simplicity of staging and sincerity of acting, since "everything ultimately depends on the human being, the *actor*."

For that very reason, he was above all a teacher: "in order to liberate theatre it was necessary to add new branches of training; sincerity alone is not sufficient, just as in science invention without technique is not enough." His book, edited after his death by his widow Suria, is mainly a practical handbook for teachers and actors, but it is also a trumpet-call for the open stage, the dedicated and highly-trained company with a broad repertoire of physical skills and varied styles, and the thorough and serious exploration of the text—all the hallmarks (the pun is just) of the RSC under Hall and his disciple Trevor Nunn, and, less reliably, of the National Theatre under both Olivier and Hall.

IF THE SURVIVAL OF THE THEATRE were, like that of religion, simply a matter of reinterpreting the old sacred texts to suit contemporary needs, we could say that in England at least it has been given the best possible chance. We have surely never had—probably no country ever has had—such a wealth of actors, directors and designers; by now, we even have the buildings to do them justice. "One fact is supremely evident", writes Lincoln Kirstein in an afterword placed oddly at the front of *Training for the Theatre*: "theatre in England today is of an expressive and operational quality which leads the world." Nor do we lack contemporary playwrights. Even such a lack-lustre and undiscriminating book as John Russell Brown's *A Short Guide to Modern British Drama*[3] gives some sense of the extraordinary explosion of new writing for the theatre that followed the success of *Look Back in Anger* in 1956, chiefly nourished by George Devine's and later William Gaskill's English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre. Most of the new plays performed there were crude and ephemeral. The long hegemony of domestic comedy on the English stage, the restrictive proscenium design of that particular building, and the traditional association of Left-wing content with naturalistic form, conspired to make much that was fresh and radical in outlook seem drearily conventional in presentation.

Nevertheless, the Royal Court in the '60s stirred things up. The theatre became news again, a place where issues were debated and our society and its values opened up for inspection. To write plays began to look less like a branch of show business or the opportunity for a romantic life-style than an activity central to the understanding of our own time and place. Playwrights came out of the woodwork in all shapes and sizes;

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[1] These quotations are taken from: the foreword to Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, translated by Elizabeth Sprigge; an address by Lorca after the opening of *Yerma* in 1934, translated by Albert E. Sloman; Ernst Toller's *My Works*, translated by Marketa Goetz; and Brecht's *A Short Organum for the Theatre* (1948), translated by John Willett. All are reprinted in *Playwrights on Playwriting* (first US edition, 1960). Edited by TOBY COLE. Methuen, £4.95.

[2] *Training for the Theatre*. By MICHEL SAINT-DENIS. Heinemann Educational, £5.95.

[3] *A Short Guide to Modern British Drama*. By JOHN RUSSELL BROWN. Heinemann Educational, £2.95.

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the RSC, triumphant with its refurbished, post-Brechtian Shakespearean repertory, rather tentatively applied its magnificent company machine to texts that were actually new; Olivier's National, even more tentatively, followed suit.

And there it all went wrong. The customers baulked, the box-office shivered, the companies took fright and dived for cover back into the classics and the golden oldies; retaining as tokens of their contemporaneity a handful of living writers who had assimilated enough of the new spirit to appear fashionably relevant, but who could be trusted to milk the applause for "dummy hearts and superficial dialogue." About a third of the 25 playwrights singled out for individual treatment in Russell Brown's slim volume are of this kind. If I pick out two particular names it is because they are among the most famous and successful, and because each represents a different facet of the problem.

NO CRITIC, STILL LESS FELLOW-PLAYWRIGHT, should underestimate Alan Ayckbourn. He is a brilliant writer of farce and light comedy, and could not be so if he did not understand and in some degree analyse people rather like ourselves, their relationships and their society. But in a cheerful, if somewhat loosely written monograph, with too much reliance on plot synopses, Michael Billington, the *Guardian*'s theatre critic, labours to establish Ayckbourn's claim to be a major dramatist,[4] which he considers to rest finally "on the permanent tug-of-war between his instinctive joy in play-writing and his wry, pained awareness of the unhappiness we inflict on ourselves and on each other."

That is true so far as it goes, but what prevents Ayckbourn being more than a sad/happy entertainer is that he puts entertainment first. His characters are not designed to carry much weight because that weight would interfere with the smooth working of the entertainment mechanism. There is nothing phoney about Ayckbourn—his plays do not pretend to be weightier than they are—but if we attribute the kind of depth and reality to his creations that Billington and Russell Brown do, we pronounce ourselves satisfied with a theatre of extremely limited scope, a distinctly unambitious, parochial theatre which cannot begin to reflect, analyse or create examples of the savage, inchoate, monstrous world that springs out at us every day, for instance, from the pages of Billington's own newspaper.

IN THE COURSE OF DEFENDING Ayckbourn against the charge of being lightweight, Billington takes exception to "the consistent smarty-boots denigration over the years of Peter Shaffer." Apart from his deft and wholly unpretentious *Black Comedy*, Shaffer's plays need all the denigration they can get if we are ever to have the kind of serious, indispensable, contemporary theatre that Strindberg thought impossible and Lorca saluted.

Shaffer has a gift for choosing emotionally-charged subjects and considerable skill at organising them into dramatic situations, using many of the devices and techniques of post-Brechtian epic theatre, but all the while retaining the essentially cosy and familiar framework of domestic comedy. He is the master of "hothouse roses" and of "dummy hearts", of apparent profundities which are actually gross simplifications, of conflicts and relationships which seem at first full of human drama but lack any firm basis in reality.

His most recent success is a glaring example. People often talk of Mozart's music as divinely-inspired: from that romantic notion, treated as if it were true, Shaffer spins a web of highly-coloured hokum—a Lady-of-Shalottery which splits from side to side the moment you look out of a window at the world outside the theatre. *Amadeus* is clever, glossy, sentimental, theatrical, but until audiences, directors and critics can tell the difference between plays such as this, which entertain with the illusion of depth, and plays whose claim on the attention is that they "offer something considerable in return", the theatre can only hope to survive as a museum or as a prelude to expense-account dinners.

Peter Hall was, of course, the man who chose and directed *Amadeus* for the National Theatre. In his recently-published *Diaries* he calls it "one of the most remarkable new plays I have ever read." Here is the nub of the problem; for if one of the prime creators of a contemporary British theatre trained and prepared for "responsibility" can so badly misread the value of *Amadeus*, how will genuinely considerable texts ever come together with the resources to realise them? Certainly Hall wants them to. In another passage from the *Diaries* he writes:

> "Sometimes I feel that the desperate turning over the past that all theatre directors do is only a search for accidental resonances which would surprise the original author and would mean nothing to his original audience. In a sense we are all making new art objects out of old plays, almost as if we were writers. A dangerous activity."

The danger consists in seeing things the wrong way round. If you are used to interpreting a text which is already, as it were, certified for reality, since it has passed the test of time and stands indeed as one of the documents of a past age, then your task is chiefly to discover its contemporary *theatrical* reality. With a new text, you have, of course, eventually to do the same, but there is in addition an earlier phase—and a far more important one—in which you have to judge it not as theatre but as truth. The more obviously theatrical it is—the more consistent with what in your experience habitually works in the theatre—the more suspicious of its truth you should be, to the point not of rejecting anything simply because it is written in speakable dialogue with good exit lines, but of considering that, given the personnel available in the British theatre, anything that strikes sufficiently true—that catches enough of the world's reality—can probably be made to work theatrically.

THE PLAYWRIGHTS WHO FOLLOWED behind the first group of Royal Court writers flourished for a time in the fringe or alternative theatre, where theatricality was less impor-

[4] *Alan Ayckbourn*. By MICHAEL BILLINGTON. Macmillan Press, £11.00, paper £3.95.

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tant than shock tactics, strong feelings, and the desire to air them. With economic cut-backs the alternative theatre went into decline, but it was no doubt always a pipe-dream to imagine that it could eventually replace the big establishments, since its audiences were too small and specialised. The survival of the theatre is as dependent as it ever was on the support of those middle-class patrons whom the determined few have been goading and girding at for more than a century; and it is now clear that, if we are to have a responsible contemporary theatre at all, it must be centred in the big theatres, even if it then grows outwards to revive the alternative theatre.

Is there any hope of such an outcome? The most successful—some would say the noisiest—of the second-wave playwrights moved out of the fringe into the Royal Court, the National and the RSC's small experimental spaces, the Other Place at Stratford and the Warehouse in London. As they moved they became—without losing their group commitment to broadly Left-wing views—distinctly less shrill and simplistic, and they ceased to be myopically concerned, as the first-wave Royal Court dramatists mostly were, with domestic issues. Above all, whatever one thinks of Hall's judgment of particular plays, he led the way in allowing one or two of these new writers on to his main stages instead of merely tucking them away in the studio.

SO AT LAST THE JUNCTION has been effected between writers with the ambition to bring contemporary reality into the theatre and a company equipped to make it work; and if the yield so far at the National has been disappointing, the RSC, treading in its steps with a full-scale production of David Edgar's *Maydays*[5] on the main Barbican stage, has demonstrated that it can work. Here is a play which, asking questions and using motifs that have obsessed several of the new playwrights, tackles the whole issue of allegiance to Left or Right, weighing authoritarian socialism against authoritarian capitalism and both against the egotism of the individual, without caricature and without patronising its audience's intelligence. Perhaps, as James Fenton argued in his review in *The Sunday Times*, it settles for too neat and comfortable a conclusion, but a faint sense of let-down at the end is a small price to pay for being able to see one of the best companies in the world unveil in front of our eyes a mirror, not of Chekhov's, Ibsen's or Shakespeare's world—picking out some hitherto unnoticed nuance—but of ours.

If audiences respond to this opportunity, if directors gain courage from it and even begin to vie with each other for the latest epic of our time (which does not, of course, have to have a contemporary setting), instead of the latest version of *Othello*, the day may yet be won. It cannot be won, though, without the help of the critics. Because of the enormous cost of theatre and its inevitable sensitivity to public hissing (both inside and outside the auditorium), theatre critics wield more power than they sometimes care to admit. If they choose to say that we are better off with reinterpreted masterpieces from the past than with curate's eggs of the present, they will be only too readily believed by audiences naturally unwilling to waste time and money on something of dubious value. In the same way that it is dangerous for theatre directors to have spent too much of their careers reviving classics, so critics suffer from having sat through too many versions of them. They think they know what a play is, or at least what is theatrical.

JAMES FENTON OUGHT TO be an exception. He started reviewing the theatre only four years ago, after a career as a political journalist, and very soon demonstrated his difference from his predecessor on *The Sunday Times* with a slashing attack on *Amadeus*, which Bernard Levin considered "an experience that far transcends even its considerable value as drama." Fenton is often a rather shorthand reviewer—reduced to banal adjectives of praise when he likes something or abuse when he doesn't—and he does not yet display the great theatre critic's ability to record a performance for posterity; nevertheless, he is unusually aware of the world beyond the theatre, and is in theory enthusiastic about new writing. Not that, to judge by *You Were Marvellous*,[6] his selection from his first two years' notices, he seems to have come up against much ambitious work, nor that when he meets it and doesn't like it—witness Howard Brenton's *Romans in Britain*—he scruples to demolish it; but his attitude is open, and he assumes that on the whole the new is likely to be more interesting than the old: "despite the great love of tradition in the theatre, it does seem to me that in the post-war years it is the discontinuity, the theatrical revolution, which is more important than the tradition."

So we can perhaps rely on Fenton; and it's always possible that if, after *Maydays*, the wind of fashion blew in the right direction, other critics might begin to ask themselves in the next year or two how they put up for so long with such a preponderance of revivals. On the other hand, the prevailing wind in our society is very much towards the past, and why should the theatre be able to escape it? Only perhaps if it can be felt (as television, because of its political sensitivity, mass audience and bureaucratic organisation, never could be) as creating some sort of counter-wind of its own; as being a place to reckon with at the heart of our society, not just an up-market fun-palace, not just a museum of high culture, but one of the media; peculiarly powerful because of its emotional immediacy, its intellectual concentration and its sheer entertainment value. For who can doubt that if we had a theatre which modelled and exemplified the world we live in, which reflected, researched and analysed our age of science and apocalypse, we should hardly be able to keep away from it?

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[5] *Maydays*. By DAVID EDGAR. Methuen, £1.95.

[6] *You Were Marvellous*. By JAMES FENTON. Cape, £8.95.

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Reading the Score

Shakespeare Staged—*By* RONALD HAYMAN

PETER HALL IS ONE OF THE greatest achievers in the history of the English theatre. Within three years of coming down from Cambridge, he had been made Director of the Arts Theatre and had launched Samuel Beckett into the London theatre with his production of *Waiting for Godot*. He was thirty when he created the Royal Shakespeare Company and forty-five when he piloted the National Theatre company into its new building. He has also been responsible for some of the most memorable Shakespeare productions of the last 25 years, including *The Wars of the Roses* (a conflation of the *Henry VI* plays with *Richard III*) and a 1965 *Hamlet* which brilliantly integrated ideas taken from T. S. Eliot and Jan Kott into a performance by David Warner—presenting Hamlet not as a ready-made hero but as a nervous student, who hero-worshipped his dead father and needed as much time as the five acts gave him to make himself into a decisive man of action. The production showed that Hall had read his way intelligently through the text, taking each line to pieces and putting it together again before handing it over to the actors. It is therefore not surprising to read in his *Diaries*[1] that Leavis was "the inspiration of my Cambridge years. . . . All the textual seriousness at the basis of Trevor [Nunn]'s work and of mine comes from Leavis . . . . He has had more influence on the contemporary theatre than any other critic."

If it was George Devine who, during his régime at the Royal Court, started handing out keys to get literature graduates inside the English theatre, from which they had long been excluded, it was Peter Hall who threw the doors wide open. John Barton, David Jones, Trevor Nunn and Jonathan Miller had been at Cambridge, Terry Hands at Birmingham. Besides textual seriousness, these directors had developed a taste for atmospheres in which one man gives mental stimulus to a group, and Hall would often begin rehearsals, as Jonathan Miller would, by delivering an hour-long lecture to the actors. Before *The Tempest* opened in 1974, Hall was told that his "most common stance in rehearsal had been that of a teacher." He glosses: "This is basically what's wrong with the production at the moment. It's too didactic, not freely creative enough."

A great many critical judgments are on display in the *Diaries*, and most of them are disappointingly lacking in acuity. Of John Osborne's *Watch It Come Down*, Hall writes: "The play is very strong, I think very good, and Bill [Bryden] has directed it wonderfully." Edward Bond's *The Woman* is rated as "a major work . . . a superb play", and the first night of *Brand* at the National was "pretty magnificent. I feel that Michael Bryant falls short of greatness, though this will come. But it's a superb production. . . . " For a director in the theatre there is no clear line between judgment and interpretation: both depend on creatively critical reading—and Hall is not rigorous enough. When Jonathan Miller wanted to stage *The Importance of Being Earnest* with all the women's parts played by men, Hall sided with Michael Blakemore and Miller, who claimed that "it was a director's right to reinterpret a play in any way that seemed significant to him." John Dexter (who had directed the all-male *As You Like It*) and Laurence Olivier sided with Harold Pinter, who maintained that an author has certain clear intentions and that the director has more responsibility to a dead dramatist than to a living one. Of all Peter Hall's critical judgments, one of the most startling comes in a comparison of Pinter with Mozart: "From my point of view there is the same precision of means, the same beauty, the same lyricism and the same sudden descents into pain, which are quickly over because of a healthy sense of the ridiculous."

Hall's 1975 *Hamlet* at the National was disappointing. A diary entry records a conversation with Peggy Ashcroft:

> "She hated it. She thought that it was gabbled and imprecise; that there was no virtue in the full text; and she didn't like the speaking direct to the audience. In short, she didn't get it at all. She was very upset by this and so was I. It's not usual for her to misunderstand what I'm up to."

By making Hamlet talk straight out to the audience, especially in the graveyard scene, Hall had been trying to minimise the discontinuity between the two halves of the play:

> "The soliloquies cease and the audience start looking at something that is no longer the public discussion of morals and ethics that the first part was. Hamlet returns from England and muses philosophically to his friend in a graveyard—and at great length."

The previews had already begun when Hall decided that

> "Hamlet should *continue* his dialogue with the audience—particularly in the graveyard scene. By the end of the performance my head was buzzing. I thought I had it. If Hamlet addresses a good deal of his graveyard humour to the audience—so that the lawyer, the politician, and my lady painted an inch thick are out there, in the audience,

[1] *Peter Hall's Diaries: The Story of a Dramatic Battle*. Edited by JOHN GOODWIN. Hamish Hamilton, £12.95.

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then the contact continues and the play goes on building. I said some of this to the cast—and then a lot more to Albert."

But Finney was too slow, in both physique and intellect, to make a good Hamlet; even his diction sounded as though his tongue had thickened. He was also too easily pleased with himself: after the second preview he told Hall "that there were pieces of the play when he really felt the stage belonged to him—a sense of ease, of freedom, of oneness with the audience." Instead of fighting his narcissism, Hall seems to have encouraged it, uncritically pleased to have him in the role. "He looks wonderful with his beard: a powerful, passionate, sexy Hamlet, glowering with resentment. I looked at him and felt cheered." Even after the conversation with Dame Peggy, it never occurred to Hall, so far as we can tell from the diary, that she may have been right.

The partnership with Finney continued into *Macbeth*:

> "Dinner with Albert. He just wouldn't give up *Macbeth*, which I desperately don't want to direct. 'Why worry', he says, 'it's only a play? Let's continue our adventures . . . why be so intense about it?' . . . The real reason for doing *Macbeth* is, I'm afraid, this: Albert has stuck by me through thick and thin. If he wants me to direct the play, I must stick by him."

It should have been predictable that even Hall would not be pleased with the results. Five days before the first preview, he judged the production to be "rather ordinary. . . . It's not wrong-headed; it just perhaps doesn't have a head at all." After the preview he told himself: "It wasn't a disaster. Now I must tidy it and give it a clear interpretative stamp." But it was much too late. After the second preview, "I am still worried about Albert. He's back to his staccato delivery. And Dorothy [Tutin] is too breathy and fading. But the production won't be a disgrace: just a rather boring plain man's guide." Two days later, "I'm sick at heart. Albert is not worried enough. Dorothy is too worried."

The previous year, Hall had watched Trevor Nunn's *Macbeth* at the Warehouse, admiring it as "the only *Macbeth* I've seen which works." But by aiming the production at a small auditorium, Nunn had illuminated one of the main problems in contemporary Shakespearean production:

> "We don't like rhetoric, we mistrust it: our actors can't create it, and our audiences don't respond to it. . . . The subtlety I saw in this *Macbeth* would have delighted the eyes of Leavis, but it was possible only because of the scale."

A cognate point arose in a conversation with Peter Brook, who

> "pointed out a paradox. In the early sixties I had insisted that all the rotundly-speaking Shakespeare actors were also in modern plays to sharpen their sensibilities. And now everybody was good at realistic mumbling, but inexpert in Shakespeare."

In fact, of course, there are two separate problems here. Even in contemporary plays, casual and intimate conversations need to be audible at the back of the upper circle but also to

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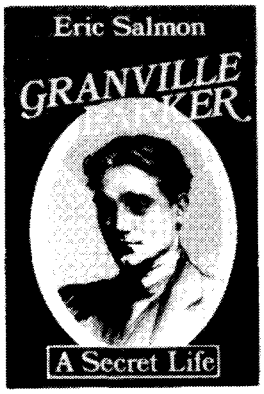

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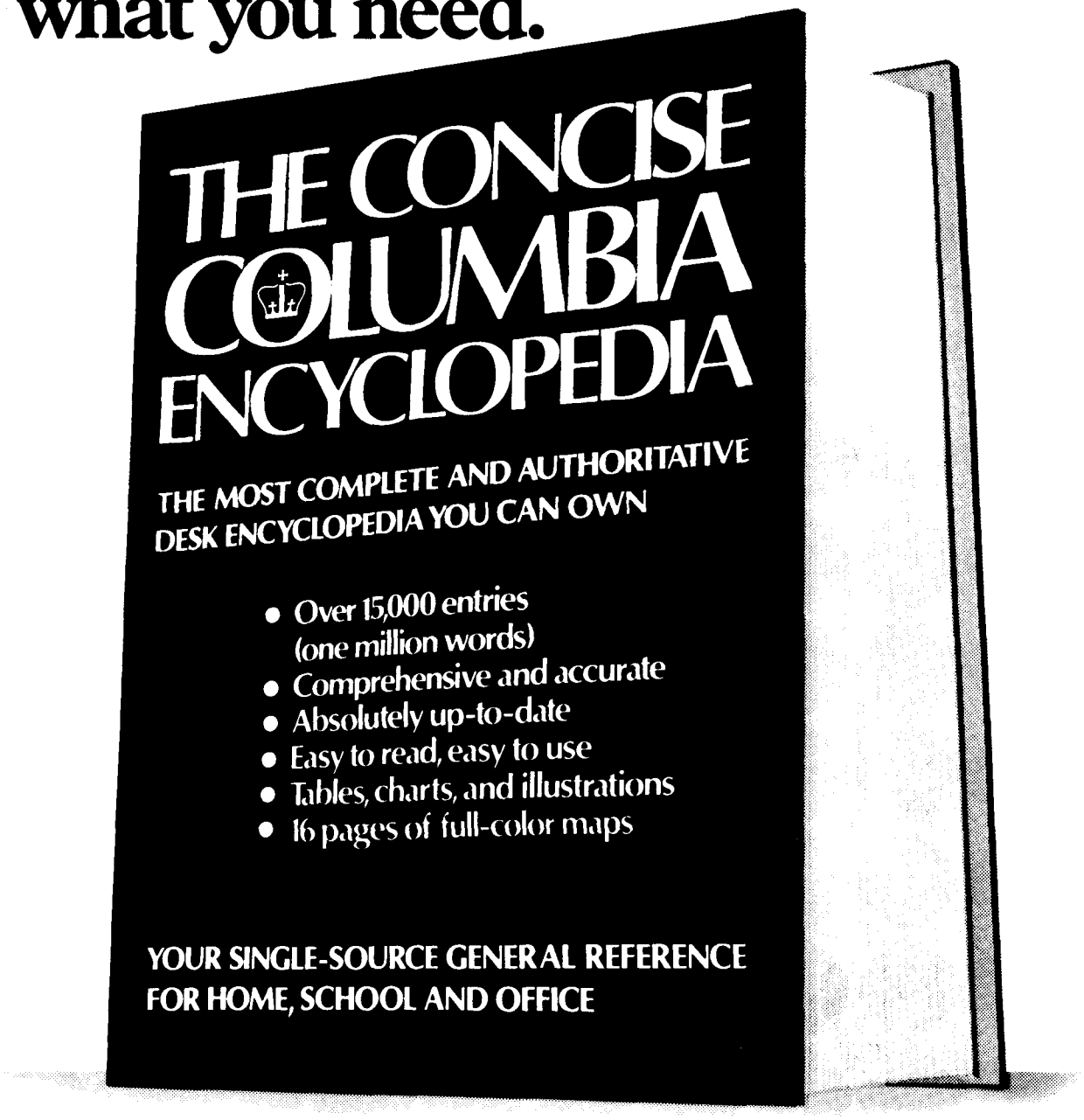
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sound unforced, and the present generation of actors is not good at projecting. The second problem is to make Elizabethan and Jacobean rhetoric acceptable, and the solution to this is perhaps to pay more attention to gradations within the texts between prose and verse, and between private conversations in verse and public declamation or speech-making in such sequences as council scenes.

THE MAJORITY OF ENGLISH PLAYGOERS must feel more grateful to Peter Hall, who has accepted political, administrative and engineering responsibility for running the world's biggest theatre machine, than to Peter Brook, who has defected to work on the other side of the Channel with a small group of actors. Hall finds some time for reading Trollope, Michael Frayn, Frank Tuohy on Yeats, and biographies of Henry Irving and Samuel Johnson, but the reading does not appear to exert direct influence on his theatrical work, whereas Brook's does: "I remember him in 1960 asking me if I had read the works of Antonin Artaud; and in 1963, the work of Jan Kott."

In his "General Editor's Preface" to the new Macmillan series called "Text and Performance", [2] Michael Scott writes that a "radical change of attitude" has abrogated the "mutual suspicion" which prevailed during the first half of this century between critic and director. They "now increasingly recognise the significance of each other's work and acknowledge their growing awareness of interdependence." This is patently untrue. Academic critics are now paying more attention to performance, but none of our directors seems to think himself dependent on critics or scholars. Hall once "dashed" from a rehearsal to a lecture by Frances Yates on *The Tempest,* but he writes about her negatively:

> "She is one of the great scholars of the world: extremely erudite. But if you had not read her books you wouldn't have had the least idea of what she was talking about. I was depressed as usual by the scholar's habit of imputing motives to artists. This evening, Shakespeare, in writing his plays, was apparently referring to the Rosicrucian doctrine and to the Hermetic tradition."

We can infer that Hall has not read her books, and there is nothing in these diaries to suggest that he has read Glynne Wickham's. But is there nothing to be gained from keeping *au courant* with research into Elizabethan stage conditions and the ways in which Shakespeare's plays were originally performed? Does all this have no bearing on the problem of how to cope with rhetoric today?

THE GENERAL EDITOR OF Routledge's "Theatre Production Series" is John Russell Brown, who is an Associate at the National Theatre; but it does not follow that Hall will read Peter Thomson's contribution to the series, *Shakespeare's*

[2] *Hamlet.* By PETER DAVISON. *Anthony and Cleopatra.* By MICHAEL SCOTT. *Henry IV, Parts I and II.* By T. F. WHARTON. "Text and Performance" series. Macmillan, £2.95 each.

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An illuminating portrait of one of Hollywood's most brilliant, obsessive, and self-destructive figures. Koszarski particularly explores von Stroheim's explosive relationship with Hollywood's studio bosses. Illustrated paperback £7.95 *Galaxy Books*

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Theatre.[3] Thomson is making a pertinent point when he insists that one of the great obstacles to understanding Elizabethan acting styles is the notion of consistency, which we have inherited from Stanislavsky. Coleridge, who was ambivalent about Edmund Kean's acting, observed: "His rapid descents from the hyper-tragic to the infra-colloquial, though sometimes productive of great effect, are often unreasonable." Though Burbage was more disciplined, argues Thomson, the discipline was "that of the scene or episode, not of the 'act' or 'play'. It was not the unity of a work of art but the variety of a story that the actor served. . . . The rapid transition on the open stage from scene to scene allowed also a rapid transition from style to style."

Hall may have been misguided to struggle for greater stylistic unity in *Hamlet* when Shakespeare constantly modulated from one style to another. In the opening sequence of *Hamlet*, "the blank verse scurries towards prose until the Ghost has come and gone, struggles to establish itself, is knocked awry by the Ghost's re-entry, and finally overstretches for an inappropriate lyricism." The acting required "is not at all the same as that required for the second scene." Until the throne and the council table make their appearance, the characters are all in too much of a hurry to become rhetorical, but the entry of the King inaugurates a courtly decorum, which "may well have been a theatrical approximation to actual courtly decorum."

Dr Leavis, in advocating a tightly focused scrutiny of the text, encouraged critics to disregard the circumstances that brought it to birth. For the theatrical director, this is a dangerous principle. A playscript is a score, and there is much to be gained from studying the acoustic that the composer had in mind and the instruments he had at his disposal. Shakespeare's writing is so subtle that it is easy to forget how slapdash the acting must have been when ten plays were being performed within two weeks. Rehearsals cannot but have been hasty and perfunctory, while, with so many memorised roles in their head, actors must often have had recourse to "fribbling" or improvisation around the scripted text. But, far from feeling constrained to be more careless, the director who studies Thomson's book will want to pay more careful attention to the modulations between one style and another. Instead of trying to homogenise a text by shaking the cream into the milk, he will watch out for changes in the level of the rhetoric. As Thomson observes, the most highflown is put into the mouths of minor characters, such as the First Player in *Hamlet*, while the prince himself often lowers the tone of sequences involving dignified formality. His language and demeanour in the first council scene are at odds with those of the others, and, in the play scene, his lubricious *doubleentendres* make it harder for the others to go on behaving decorously.

Another change of style occurs at the beginning of his first soliloquy: "The secular court is challenged, its complacent assumption that all the seams can be tucked in without reference to higher authority defied." This is

> "the rhetoric of passion, asking of the actor those detailed gestures which were believed to be the appropriate, and in this special sense the 'natural', physical counterpart of deep

[3] *Shakespeare's Theatre*. By PETER THOMSON. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £8.95.

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feeling. It was probably at such peaks that Elizabethan acting moved furthest from what we would call naturalism, but the idea that the human body might remain comparatively still while the passions race is comparatively new to England."

The change occurred, Thomson suggests, between Irving's Hamlet and Forbes Robertson's. The Elizabethan actor was more athletic and physically demonstrative: "the rogue tradition had not yet been stifled by respectability."

The chapter on *Hamlet* is the richest in this useful book, explaining the play's resonance by discussing the way it uses acting as a three-dimensional metaphor. Like Cordelia, who refuses to compete with the sycophantic rhetoric of her sisters, Hamlet starts out by trying not to put on a performance, but a refusal to act spreads into a failure to take action, as he sees when he compares himself with the more volatile First Player. Anyway, to survive in a society which Claudius has made so decadent, he has to put on an act. He simulates madness in a performance which will be outstripped by Ophelia's: her madness is genuine, even if the boy actor employs the conventional gestures.

Thomson argues that "Much of the language of *Hamlet*, and most of its tension, are associated with the processes and practice of 'seeming' and of 'watching' . . . . The Elizabethan actor . . . was well aware of the distinction between the *true* and the *false* passion." Peter Hall has not fully understood this. According to him, "Claudius is in a sense the most honest person in the play—the man who sees most clearly his own faults and his own problems. The prayer scene is an open and candid discussion with the audience of his dilemma." But Claudius is better than Hamlet at putting on a rhetorical display of grief for the dead King. In Thomson's view,

> "The expertly deceptive Claudius has introduced seeming to the Danish court. The placing of the Players *as a healthy contrast* has to be seen as Shakespeare's serious claim for the moral value of 'true' acting . . . It is because *Hamlet* tests and exploits the histrionic temperaments of those who read or watch it, demands a recognition of the way in which we understand our circumstances by silently dramatising them, that it has held its place for so long as the centrepiece of western theatre."

ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO ACCOUNT FOR the appeal of *Hamlet* is to be found in Peter Davison's book on the play in the Macmillan "Text and Performance" series, but, less enlighteningly, Davison points to the mystery and the variety to be found in the text. The series is designed principally for sixth-form and undergraduate students, and the idea behind it is a good one. The books are short—about 80 pages, including prelims, reading list, and index—but even within this compass much could be achieved by discussing problems of text and problems of performance in two separate parts. Unfortunately the editor, a polytechnic lecturer, has chosen contributors who write rather as if they were delivering under-prepared lectures at a polytechnic, digressing exorbitantly and choosing examples carelessly.

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Nor does he make any serious effort to discipline them into any uniformity of approach. The "Performance" half of each book is devoted to critical accounts of productions, but he does not insist on their limiting themselves to productions they have seen, or even to modern productions, though this is what his rubric promises. In the *Hamlet* book, Peter Davison leads off with a section called "Cutting to Shape: the Globe and the Garrick versions." This does not deal with performance at all, but with the texts used in the original staging and in the Garrick production of 1772. Davison then spends nearly eight of his 80 pages on Olivier's film, while four of his five photographs are of Peter Hall's 1965 *Hamlet,* the only straightforward stage production he tries to describe, his final example being Charles Marowitz's collage version of the play. Anyone who wants to find out—or to be reminded of—what the 1965 *Hamlet* was like would do better to read Ronald Bryden's review, reprinted in his book *The Unfinished Hero,* than to consult Davison, who lavishes precious space on trivia, without writing vividly or even clearly:

> "Elizabeth Spriggs as the Queen vomited so violently and realistically at the end of the play that mimesis and reality were in danger of coming into conflict (not to mention those of the audience nearby)."

What does this mean?

The question of mimesis is treated more carefully in A.D. Nuttall's *A New Mimesis: Shakespeare and the Representation of Reality.*[4] In the Elizabethan playhouse, there was no possibility of making the audience forget that what it was watching was only a performance. Many of the *Verfremdungseffekte* that Brecht interposed to remind his audience of this were devices based on an artificial reassertion of Elizabethan stage practice. As Sir Philip Sidney put it (in a passage cited by Peter Thomson), "The Poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes."

The main tenor of Professor Nuttall's book is anti-structuralist, and in the course of defending materialist and objectivist approaches to drama he questions whether it is useless, as L. C. Knights argues in his famous essay, to pose the question "How many children had Lady Macbeth?" Doesn't Knights' case depend on a refusal to admit that inferences can and must be drawn from information contained in the text? "If no inferences whatever are allowed, certain negative conclusions, on the other hand, can be drawn about Hamlet. For example he has no legs. For Shakespeare never mentions them—or may we infer . . . one leg from a down-gyved stocking?" All Nuttall is prepared to concede is that Knights was right in "his intuition that Bradleian critics occasionally carried their unverifiable surmises to ludicrous lengths."

Nuttall is better when he moves away from testy generalisation to grapple with specific questions, and he understands that problems of staging are inseparable from textual

[4] *A New Mimesis: Shakespeare and the Representation of Reality.* By A. D. Nuttall. Methuen, £12.95, paper £6.95.

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problems. Pleading that Desdemona should be allowed to accompany him to Cyprus, Othello says:

> *Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not*
> *To please the palate of my appetite;*
> *Nor to comply with heat—the young affects*
> *In me defunct—and proper satisfaction;*
> *But to be free and bounteous to her mind. . . .*

This is how the lines appear in Alexander's amended and repunctuated edition of the works, but the first Quarto of 1622 reads: "Nor to comply with heat, the young affects in my defunct, and proper satisfaction." Nuttall's intriguing suggestion is that editorial interference may be masking a deliberate confusion, which could be exploited theatrically by letting Othello stammer and stumble, tangled in his own syntax. Desdemona has just intervened in the senatorial debate with a charmingly frank but startling reference to "the rites for why I love him." Aware that the Senators may share the racial prejudice which is crudely expressed in Iago's lines about the old black ram which is "tupping your white ewe", Othello could be sufficiently embarrassed to falter in his rhythmic speech. As Nuttall admits, "the speech, thus unamended, would count as the most extreme piece of naturalistic confusion in the canon (though Leontes' speech, 'Affection, thy intention stabs the centre' in *The Winter's Tale*, I ii 138–46, comes very close)." The linguistic collapse would also look forward to the syntactic chaos in some of Othello's subsequent expletive outbursts: "Noses, ears and lips", for example, in Act Four Scene One.

IN THE CARTOON-STRIP *Othello*[5]—the second in a series launched last year with *Macbeth*—Oscar Zarate has dressed Iago in a red cowl for the opening scene, and provided Roderigo with a hand-held carnival mask which has a pointed nose. In the foreground of the first cartoon a buxom Emilia sprawls nude in bed. On the green blanket a blue monkey clutches at her arm; while, in the background, the hook-nosed Iago is reaching out for the bulging purse held by a morose Roderigo, who is standing on the far side of a curved window which makes the room look like a cabin in a liner. The sky is bright blue, though it has darkened by the time the two men are walking alongside the canals past the mauve houses of Zarate's Venice. When they rouse Brabantio with their shouting, his window turns from black to a bright electric yellow.

Undeniably the series may be helpful in provoking classroom discussion: a generation addicted to television and video-cassettes may find it hard to translate printed blank verse into mental pictures. Here the visualisation has been done by a resourceful cartoonist in lurid colours and superabundant detail, but he is neither visualising nor depicting action on a stage. We see only a vulgarised Venice and a caricatured Cyprus, while the unabridged text appears in the speech bubbles with no attempt to indicate line-breaks. The breakdown of the speeches into units is determined by the convenience of the cartoonist, and it would be possible to read every word in the script without understanding that Shakespeare was not writing in prose.

Neither in the classroom nor in the rehearsal room are we achieving the right balance between reading Shakespeare's language as "opaque"—to use Nuttall's terms—and reading it as "transparent." It should be self-evident that the plays are what they are because Shakespeare wrote them in the way that he did; but both actors and schoolchildren are being encouraged to ignore the modulations between verse and prose, and between one kind of verse and another.

[5] *Othello*. Illustrated by OSCAR ZARATE. "Oval Projects", Sidgwick & Jackson, £6.50, paper £4.50.

Makers & Frames

Film Books—By ALAN BROWNJOHN

ART IS SHORT, life is long. The usual maxim has been reversed in the fate of many, many major films. If they survived the contractual cajoleries of the companies and the dismal pressures of producers and were, at least, made in something approaching the form their directors envisaged, that was rarely the end of the story. They still stood the risk of mutilation by the cutter at the behest of the exhibitors, slashed into parodies of themselves for export, reduced to unrecognisable nonsense by the publicity, or simply left to rot in the can (literally to rot in some cases, and that even in archives). Every new history of a famous production, every (or nearly every) new biography of a famous director, offers new horror stories: films halted in mid-shot, directors changed, releases bungled; critical malice or ignorance, destruction of copies, deliberate loss or concealment of whole pictures—or worse, the conversion of them for political reasons into what they were never intended to be. Mere writers of books, of which more copies are usually made (and which can be themselves copied by hand without expense, or be hidden and transported so much more easily) are fortunate by comparison.

And yet. . . . To read the lives of D. W. Griffith, or Erich von Stroheim, or Abel Gance is to realise that the financial backers of the great silent movies were contending with mania of an altogether exceptional variety. Into the early cinema flowed numbers of people who wanted to make history-in-

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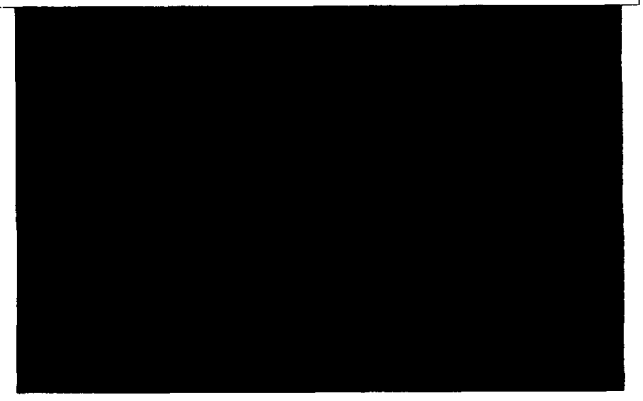

action, and make cinematic history in so doing—bestriding like colossi the American Civil War or 20 centuries of Western civilisation (in *Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*), or the French revolutionary wars (in *Napoleon*), or all the splendours of Imperial Vienna (in *Merry-Go-Round*). Their demands on patience, on physical stamina, above all on money, were extreme and unremitting and guiltless. As the cost of von Stroheim's *Foolish Wives* vanished at high speed through the studio roof, Universal made the best of an impossible situation by turning it to publicity advantage. "He's going to make you *hate him!*" said the posters displaying their megalomaniac actor-director with his riding crop, "even if it takes a million dollars of our money to do it!" Abel Gance, negotiating for money with which to make *Napoleon* (originally conceived as six pictures), built on this legend, pointing out—with innocence or pure cheek?—that *his* films would cost only $100,000 more than that. The Goldwyns, the Mayers, the Thalbergs had much to endure from the Napoleons of celluloid in whom they invested cash. And the industry certainly took its vengeance, by leaving posterity not the unimpaired works of crazed geniuses, but a litter of travestied copies.

In his book about Gance,[1] Kevin Brownlow relates with an infectious enthusiasm (it transcends a certain awkwardness of style) the way in which he came to make his celebrated reconstruction of *Napoleon*. At the age of fifteen, "already obsessed by the cinema", he discovered what he thought might be a dull classroom film listed in a dealer's catalogue: *Napoleon Bonaparte and the French Revolution*. Viewing this abridged 9.5 mm version of Gance's epic on his home projector, Brownlow rapidly realised he was watching a film which proved the cinema "capable of anything." Thus began a long process of searching for the remaining reels of *Napoleon* (the dealer had sold him two out of six); researching the whereabouts of better copies; meeting (at first by accident) the director himself, then in his late seventies; and eventually labouring to reconstruct the film in a form and a condition which would as nearly as possible reproduce Gance's original, all six hours of it, colour tinting, multi-screen effects, and new orchestral score. The story of the triumph of *Napoleon* at its American and British screenings, the general critical acclaim, the satisfaction it gave to Gance himself (who lived just long enough to appreciate his renewed fame, dying at the age of ninety-two in 1981) is now well-known. Kevin Brownlow's book is an enthralling and revealing testament to his devotion, and to his critical perception in discerning the masterpiece that lay behind those mangled fragments of the film which had been in circulation.

Fate and the film industry had done its best to ensure that Brownlow's task would be difficult. The reconstruction of *Napoleon* meant the tracking down of various extended or truncated copies of the film, the endurance of disappointment when a bad copy brought temporary disillusion, the patience to haggle with archivists, and even to resist Gance's pressure to take his own sound remake of *Napoleon* more seriously. At one point Brownlow spent evenings and week-ends working with Mylar tape and razor blades to make new sprocket holes on a badly damaged reel.

[1] *Napoleon: Abel Gance's Classic Film*. By KEVIN BROWNLOW. Cape, £10.95.

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Concern and expertise of this order would be required to restore most films which have been decimated by producers or distributors, and they are not going to get it. In many cases (*The Magnificent Ambersons, Greed, October*) it is presumably too late. But Brownlow's example shows how it might still be done for other films, and incidentally casts a revealing light on the way of the industry with its products and its creative human resources. "The world is divided between those who have seen *Napoleon* and those who have not." The handsomeness of the stills in this distinguished personal and historical record should go a long way to convince those of Kevin Brownlow's readers who have not yet seen the film that Gance may have been the genius, in *Napoleon,* that he claims.

THE EXTRAORDINARY DEMANDS made by Abel Gance on backers, assistant directors, actors, extras and public seem reasonable in comparison with those which Erich von Stroheim attempted to exact in his Hollywood years. In *The Man You Loved to Hate,*[2] his comprehensive survey of "von" (with full notes, plot summaries and filmography), Richard Koszarski is at pains to prove him the artist rather than the professional: "One does not expect to find Hart Crane or Edgar Allan Poe exercising the same muscles as Longfellow or Tennyson." In other words, von Stroheim claimed the license of a perfectionist romantic who would permit no interference (least of all from cash-conscious producers) with his own artistic instincts.

He behaved in the studios, with other people's money and his team's physical stamina, as if he had the liberty of a poet with malleable, yet intractable, words. Shooting might start at 9 a.m. and finish at 5 a.m. next day—only to resume again at nine. No detail was to be wrong, or out of place, however expensive accuracy might be. Take, and retake, if necessary dozens of times, to achieve the effect only von Stroheim instinctively knew to be right. Spend month after month on the cutting and shaping of the rough copy. No wonder that the heavy, philistine hand of the company fell fast on his work. *Foolish Wives* originally ran to thirty reels. Universal gave a slashed version to a cutter, put him on a specially equipped train to New York, and told him to have the shortened version ready for première on arrival. "The train roared through Salt Lake City, Omaha and Chicago trailing thousands of feet of cut von Stroheim footage in its wake."

The Man You Loved to Hate tells an astonishing story of frustrated egoism. Erich von Stroheim (born the son of a Jewish hatter, without the "von", and brought up in the lower middle class, at some distance from the pre-war Viennese glories he strove so passionately to transfer to the screen) directed, in 1919, *Blind Husbands,* a film which Koszarski levelly describes as making "the most impressive film debut in Hollywood history before *Citizen Kane.*" But by the time, ten years later, of the advent of sound—to which he reacted, like Abel Gance, with a fatal uncertainty—he had systematically ruined any conceivable chance of being entrusted with the making of any film of note, in Hollywood or elsewhere. Again and again the pattern of sheer, egomaniacal extravagance had reappeared, culminating in the wild liberties taken in the teeth of a 26-page contract for *Greed.* Von Stroheim's *Merry Widow* restored his popular reputation—it was a critical and a box-office triumph—but the epic and scandalous excesses, visual and financial, of the highly original *Wedding March* and *Queen Kelly* destroyed his credibility as a Hollywood director even if they served to enhance his reputation as a free, creative spirit with later generations.

In *The Wedding March,* the idyll of the lovers in the blossoming orchard is destroyed by the furious wind which sends the thousands of petals swirling around them in a snow storm. Von Stroheim had supervised the decoration of the trees with anything between fifty and five hundred thousand hand-made blossoms. He obliged actors to consume rotting meat in the name of realism. It could not go on. By the time he reached *Walking Down Broadway* he had been bargained down to making an unambitious, collaborative effort, keeping up his amazing working schedules, with their appalling demands on actors and technicians, only by sipping a quart of Scotch during an evening on the set. In the early 1930s he could only land the most humble of acting and advisory jobs in the studios.

The story of *The Man You Loved to Hate* ends with von Stroheim's departure from Hollywood to find more enduring fame as an actor, in the Europe which gave him the part of von Rauffenstein in Jean Renoir's *La Grande Illusion.* When he eventually regained a little of his earlier Hollywood notoriety it

[2] *The Man You Loved to Hate: Erich von Stroheim and Hollywood.* By RICHARD KOSZARSKI. Oxford University Press, £7.95.

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was with Gloria Swanson in *Sunset Boulevard*; the false aristocrat and fallen director who could not drive a car was playing the chauffeur to the falling star. Richard Koszarski's deeply researched and thoroughly told tale of horrors would arouse more interest in the "lost" work of von Stroheim—notably *Greed*—if von Stroheim could possibly have emerged more sympathetically. But this was an impossibility for such a case of bizarre ambition and creative fanaticism.

IN RATIONAL SWEDEN THEY SEEM to order things better. Ingmar Bergman's route to achievement and celebrity, as recorded in Peter Cowie's new critical biography,[3] is smooth and tranquil compared with the struggles and lurid failures of Gance and von Stroheim. In keeping with Bergman's progress, this is a clear and well-ordered book, meticulous in charting his family background and cultural heritage, lucid in its account of his early ventures into theatrical production and film-making. Cowie is constrained to admit that he leaves "the task of pursuing more dramatic and licentious revelations to my successors in the decades to come", since he writes about a living person. But it is difficult to imagine that those successors would be able to add much that was of critical relevance to this succinct and careful evaluation of Bergman's life and work.

Does one notice with Bergman (as with Buñuel) a decline in critical appreciation in recent years? And would that be because recent modes of film criticism are ill at ease with so thoroughgoing an *auteur*, a director with such obvious roots in theatre, and with such magisterial command over actors? With Bergman insisting that *Fanny and Alexander* will be the last film he makes for the cinema, Cowie's book provides an opportunity for a critical reassessment. The picture that emerges from its remarkably detailed, yet never overweighted, film-by-film account is of a director whose finest work—though he has been consistent enough in quality to make almost every new Bergman film an event—will survive all changes in critical fashion.

Peter Cowie's gift is for leading his readers persuasively back into the films which they last saw perhaps ten or twenty years before, with a minimum of plot summary and a brilliantly apposite choice of stills. Fears that *Sawdust and Tinsel* or even *The Seventh Seal* might now show up as melodramatic are instantly dispelled, the bleak integrity of Bergman's trilogy from the early 1960s (*Through a Glass Darkly, Winter Light, The Silence*) is restored—they are important films—and the gothic violence of *The Hour of the Wolf* and *Shame* is convincingly elucidated. The nearest equivalent to a damaging conflict with his backers in Bergman's case was his dismal, almost unforgivable, treatment at the hands of the taxmen, leading to his self-imposed exile in Germany in the mid-1970s. Cowie may only be faulted for undue kindness to the embittered film Bergman made in response to that treatment: *The Serpent's Egg* is surely an unspeakably clumsy and hysterical production for a major director. It is a relief to come to *Autumn Sonata*,

[3] *Ingmar Bergman: A Critical Biography*. By PETER COWIE. Secker & Warburg, £12.50.

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backed by American and British cash, bringing back Ingrid Bergman to act in Swedish, and filmed with unswerving fidelity to his own talent and imagination.

WHAT CAN JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR[4] make of the stardom of Ingrid Bergman? She was "a great film star—one of the greatest—and at moments, when necessary, a great actress too." The great sadness is that Ingrid Bergman herself rarely saw that it ought to have *been* necessary. John Russell Taylor wisely places in his Prologue the famous still from *Autumn Sonata* showing Ingrid Bergman and Liv Ullmann, mother and daughter, at the piano, and gives a proper emphasis to her early career in the Swedish cinema, even though her films there were as slight as most she made later. It serves to show what might have been; because a few pages later she is (in a caption) "Selznick's Golden Girl." The long, only too innocent waste of a talent had started, which no amount of cult reverence (the *Casablancas,* the *Spellbounds*) can ever redeem. This tribute, with its sumptuous photographs, will serve—when necessary—as a coffee-table volume. But under the requisitely bland surface of its narration is more than one subtle hint that the cinema may have ruined talents in making films as well as in destroying them. Ingrid Bergman, John Russell Taylor ruefully notes, was "not especially gifted in self-knowledge."

WILLIAM ROTHMAN'S BOOK on Alfred Hitchcock is subtitled, reasonably enough *The Murderous Gaze*[5] Rothman is nothing if not murderously attentive to his subject, which is Hitchcock traced almost frame-by-frame through five of his films: *The Lodger, Murder!, The Thirty-Nine Steps, Shadow of a Doubt* and *Psycho*. There is no question at all that this is a pioneering book for its sheer thoroughness: a detailed study with carefully numbered stills of hundreds of single frames in an attempt to make us see Hitchcock's film-making in a new light and with an enhanced sense of his extreme skill in calculating and achieving his effects. If you have seen the film in question (I have seen three out of the five) and preferably seen it recently, the technique, if occasionally overplayed, is illuminating. If you have not seen the film, you are groping in a labyrinth of visual description and analysis, accompanied by Rothman's booming claims for the profundity of the Master. Thus, with *Psycho*:

> "[looking through the peephole] Norman is also a subject of the camera, a creature who may be framed in a view. This is affirmed by the following shot, an extreme close-up of Norman's viewing eye, viewed objectively from the side. But if this is Norman's eye, it equally stands in for our eye and Hitchcock's eye, for any eye intently engaged in the act of viewing."

Is there really so much in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* and *Psycho*

[4] *Ingrid Bergman: A Tribute.* By JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR. Elm Tree Books, £9.95.

[5] *Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze.* By WILLIAM ROTHMAN. Harvard University Press, £19.25, $27.50.

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as Rothman and many others make out? Does "modernist cinema" begin with Hitchcock? Was Hitchcock conducting "an investigation of the nature of the camera"? Or was he making implausible thrillers with a style of cinematic ingenuity which has transfixed enough of the more rarefied critics to start a cult?

A sceptical view of Hitchcock might run something like this: his films almost always begin credibly, with clear, rapid and convincing establishment of setting and character. There follows a middle section in which the elaborations of the plot become distinctly hard to credit; sheer unlikeliness begins to weigh so heavily as to cause outright disbelief or sceptical impatience. Finally, Hitchcock is obliged to rescue his plot and his hero/heroine by a reel of brilliant contrivances which are even more incredible. I am irritated, not scared, by Norman Bates in *Psycho*, because Hitchcock is playing on such elementary fears. I still leap in terror, after seven viewings of Bergman's *Persona*, at the appearance of Mr Vogler, because he is absolutely unaccountable and comes with the force of the deepest most inexplicable dread. I don't find the profundity —I don't find the interest—of Hitchcock's films sufficient to make William Rothman's spectacular concentration on their detailed ingenuities seem justified. But the passionate detail of his analysis will send me back to look harder the next time *Notorious* or *Strangers on a Train* appears on the screen; or the first time *Vertigo* does.

[6] *Australian Cinema: The First Eighty Years*. By GRAHAM SHIRLEY and BRIAN ADAMS. Angus & Robertson/Currency Press, £8.95.

[7] *British Cinema History*. Edited by JAMES CURRAN and VINCENT PORTER. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.50, paper £8.95.

Serious film history may be undertaken as a careful charting of cinematic events, as in Graham Shirley and Brian Adams's account of Australian Cinema,[6] which uncovers a wealth of activity between the silent *Story of the Kelly Gang* in 1906 and the notable revival in the Australian industry in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Or it may argue a thesis, as Robert Philip Kolker does in his survey of modernism in the art. Or it can acknowledge that "cinema" means a complex of forms and processes which may only be properly understood if we grasp the technological and economic background, and the relevance of its forebears in literature and drama.

THIS IS THE METHOD OF James Curran's and Vincent Porter's *British Cinema History*,[7] a volume which comprises nineteen chapters by individual contributors, spanning the years from the early development of the silent film industry to the latest *Carry On*. The result is a patchwork of painstakingly researched essays which coalesce into a broad, useful, and often illuminating history. It is important to have, at the beginning, Raymond Williams's reminder, in a chapter which questions the entire terminology in which we have been accustomed to discuss cinema, that there are very few films for which there is not a 19th-century precedent in drama or light entertainment. This is neatly supplemented by Michael Chanan's evidence that chains and syndicates had already produced, by the 1890s, a uniformity of music-hall entertainment; silent films could thus rapidly replace live entertainment by using the existing network—rather as the

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Saxons used the Roman roads. Regulatory acts of parliament concerned with safety greatly helped the organisation and growth of capital in the exhibition trade, the exhibitors increasingly determining the sort of films which would pass the trade's own British Board of Film Censors—the sort of films which would be made in the first place, since there was no sense or profit in making a film which the censors would not allow to be shown. Home-grown film giants struggled, with the aid of the quota system, to keep the British cinema alive in the face of competition from a vast American industry which could always win with economies of scale. (The same would be true of Australian cinema, in a land of more sun but even less capital.) British cinema, Robert Murphy wryly observes in his essay on "Rank's attempt on the American market", did not couple commercial acumen with creative flair.

Was (and is) the British cinema so creatively unenterprising? (It rates scarcely more than an occasional respectful mention in Robert Philip Kolker's closely argued—and critically very convincing—thesis about "modernist cinema": the Italian neo-realists, the French New Wave, the Latin Americans, Bertolucci, Fassbinder and others.[8]) Ealing Studios is acutely observed by Ian Green, who spots its basic, genteel weakness: the Ealing comedies permit a little unorthodoxy and then drown it in gales of cosy laughter. Britain's own neo-realist cinema of the 1950s and 1960s is lashed for its misogyny in John Hill's chapter called "Working-Class Realism and Sexual Reaction": surely it was more daring and less stereotyped than he suggests?

The principal product of the British industry at this time (when Bergman was working in Sweden, Godard in France, Kurosawa in Japan) was Hammer Films—they received the Queen's Award for Industry. Vincent Porter teeters on the edge of making intellectual claims for them, as a genre. Marion Jordan surveys the *Carry On* films (I trust that even post-structuralist critics can see that they are worthless) with more lightness of touch:

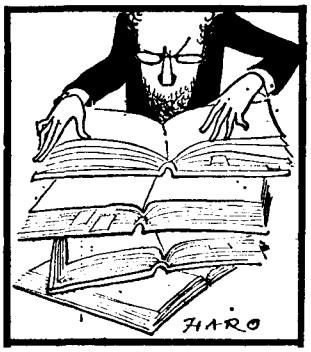
> "they asserted by their themes, and by the gusto with which they were presented, a lower-class, masculine resistance to 'refinement'; an insistence on sexuality, physicality, fun; on the need for drink in a kill-joy world, for shiftiness in an impossibly demanding industrial society, for cowardice amid the imposed heroism."

British Cinema History is invaluable for its notes, statistical appendices and bibliography. All that is lacking is some up-to-date critical appraisal of our very own British cinema revival, of the 1970s and 1980s; a chapter sifting out what genuine nuggets there might be among the fool's gold, to prove that *Gandhi* was really more than an exercise in *Reader's Digest* history, *The Draughtsman's Contract* better than an undergraduate *jeu d'esprit*, *Local Hero* something other than an insufferably self-satisfied pot-boiler, Ealing Studios alive and well and living near Aberdeen.

[8] *The Altering Eye*. By Robert Philip Kolker. Oxford University Press, £6.95.

Life's Victims

Recent Fiction—By James Lasdun



J. M. Coetzee's new novel is even better than its remarkable predecessor. *Waiting for the Barbarians*, a study of the paranoia that at once fosters and undermines the ambitions of imperialism, was essentially a fable, with all the strengths and limitations that word implies. *Life and Times of Michael K*[1] is something of a fable too, but it works also as a piece of vivid, palpable realism. Its themes are suffering and oppression—a passive man, isolated by a hare lip and a simple mind, trying to make sense of life in a state that subjects him to a series of atrocious physical and psychological assaults. One thinks immediately of Kafka, and of course the hero's—or rather the victim's—name is an explicit reference to Kafka. But the point of that reference is as much to invoke contrast as comparison. It is no longer necessary to hold a distorting mirror to reality, Coetzee implies, in order to expose the psychosis in the relation of state to individual—or not when the state in question happens to be South Africa. The things that happen to Michael K make harrowing reading, the more so because one never doubts they could happen one day to any of South Africa's dispossessed.

K's only human contact is with his sick mother. Life in their cupboard room in riot-torn Cape Town becomes unendurable. K quits his job as municipal gardener, and decides to take his mother to the farm where she grew up, near Prince Albert. Unable to obtain the exit permit that would allow them to travel on a train, they set off illegally, K carting his

[1] *Life and Times of Michael K*. By J. M. Coetzee. Secker & Warburg, £7.95.

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mother in a converted wheelbarrow.

The journey that follows is a sort of pilgrimage through hell. Turned back by police, attacked by robbers, sleeping in the freezing scrub, moving in constant fear of troop convoys authorised to shoot suspicious-looking wayfarers, they find themselves in the town of Stellenbosch, where the mother dies. Bereft, clinging to his few possessions and to the jar of his mother's ashes, K enters a life of increasingly hopeless vagrancy, running the gamut of forced labour, starvation, dismal hospitals, rehabilitation camps, and the host of other degradations his country provides for its detritus.

Coetzee describes it all with a calm, dispassionate precision. There is no revelling in horror. Understatement is employed, sometimes quite brilliantly, to show how barbarity can become institutionalised, and enter the minds of its agents so thoroughly that they perpetrate it without any particular sense of malice: " 'You climb the fence and I'll shoot you dead, mister. No hard feelings' ", says a guard at a camp for the homeless. And the word *explained* takes on a grotesque resonance when a dog handler in the same camp confiscates a radio from a woman: "He dropped it to the earth and stamped on it. 'No radios', he explained."

Simple-minded as he is, K is a complex character, sometimes problematically so. As a paradigm of passive suffering he is an awesome creation. A frightening vacancy of spirit brings him close to complete immobility:

> "When he awoke in the morning he faced only the single huge block of the day, one day at a time. He thought of himself as a termite boring its way through a rock. There seemed nothing to do but live."

And even his one major act of resistance, refusing prison food (in itself a decidedly passive form of revolt), is presented as something forced on him by an ineluctable natural law, rather than his own intention.

Coetzee is marginally less convincing when he tries to interpret K for us, instead of letting us do the work for ourselves. In the short section dealing with K's hunger strike, he switches from an authorial point of view to that of the prison doctor—an archetypal white liberal, plagued with uncertainty about the role assigned him (not unlike the magistrate in *Waiting for the Barbarians*). In contrast to Coetzee's own impassive coolness, the doctor's appraisal of K is highly emotional, a series of pat formulae grabbed at in an effort to turn this wretched man who refuses his help into a symbol he can accommodate:

> "I see you as . . . a soul blessedly untouched by doctrine, untouched by history . . . a creature left over from an earlier age, like the coelacanth or the last man to speak Yanqui. . . . "

There is perhaps a mild satire intended, on the kind of megalomaniac guilt to which white liberals are prone, but it is hard to be sure, and one is glad to leave the doctor behind.

In the course of the book, K's past as a municipal gardener is revived. He does find the farm—now derelict—at Prince Albert, and becomes obsessed with a continually thwarted project to raise pumpkins and supply his own minuscule needs. Here Coetzee shows a hint of greed over his character, trying to impose on K's role as indomitable victim that of Crusoe; the two do not always sit comfortably together.

But these are minor blemishes on what remains a work of tremendous depth and force—one that fully deserves its 1983 Booker Prize. The final pages (in which K, barely alive, is casually befriended and pickpocketed by a pimp, and as casually fellated by a silver-wigged prostitute, before returning at last to his dismal cupboard room) provide a conclusion of powerful and appropriate chilliness to a study of life at one of its furthest extremities.

HAD THE STORY OF Michael K been told by a sophisticated European with a budding post-Modernist's appreciation of the fantastical, it might have come out something like Italo Calvino's *Marcovaldo*.[2] The namesake of these stories (first published in 1963) is another of life's victims, engaged in a similar doomed struggle to preserve his family from hunger, illness, cold and want. But while Coetzee's narrative is one of sustained high seriousness, Calvino's is mined with bizarre comedy and surreal catastrophe. Coetzee, as another critic has pointed out, is a man possessed; Calvino is a virtuoso performer, his eye seldom straying from the audience.

Marcovaldo is a drudge at a shipping-office in an industrial city. A residual *mouzhik* mentality leaves him ill-adapted to urban existence. He hankers for a life attuned to the passing of the seasons, and watches eagerly for the small impingements of

[2] *Marcovaldo*. By ITALO CALVINO. Translated by WILLIAM WEAVER. Secker & Warburg, £7.95.

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nature upon the city. But where he looks for solace he finds invariably heartache—or in some cases heartburn: the wild mushrooms he notices on a strip of earth, watching them ripen, frantic with anxiety lest someone else should spot them before he picks them, turn out to be poisonous. The birdlime he spreads across his roof, in a vain effort to trap some of the woodcock migrating over the city, succeeds only in capturing one mangy municipal pigeon and infuriating his landlady.

This defeating of expected pleasure is given as an occasion for compassionate laughter. Marcovaldo is a clown from the *commedia*—or rather, Calvino is the clown and Marcovaldo his stooge. Ingenious variations on the banana skin lie in ambush for him all about the city. A barge full of sand that he buries himself in—a putative cure for rheumatism—breaks free of its moorings and catapults him over a weir into a crowd of Saturday bathers. And in "The Garden of Stubborn Cats", a miniature epic of exquisite zaniness involving Marcovaldo's attempts to hold on to a trout he has caught from a restaurant tank, he is put through his paces with the kind of elaborate malignancy one associates with the more demented end of animated cartoons. Just as he is about to secure his precious fish from the claws of a garden full of hungry cats, the prize is robbed from him through the windows of an adjacent villa;

> "two yellow, skinny hands darted out: one was brandishing scissors; the other, a frying-pan. The hand with the scissors was raised above the trout, the hand with the frying-pan was thrust under it. The scissors cut the line, the trout fell into the pan; hands, scissors and pan withdrew, the blind closed: all in the space of a second. Marcovaldo was totally bewildered."

Directing this deadpan and perfectly executed slapstick is an acute sense of the economic forces at play upon citizens such as Marcovaldo. An author's note tells us that the stories cover a period of transition in Italy, from the poverty of the early 1950s to the "illusions of an economic boom" in the mid-1960s. The period overlaps that of Calvino's own transition from attempting, as he puts it, "the realistic-novel-reflecting-the-problems-of-Italian-society", to the exuberant playfulness of his mature work. These two developments, of theme and style, are wonderfully complementary. As the illusory boom hits Marcovaldo's city, in the form of brimming supermarket trolleys and deluges of free samples from soap manufacturers, so the comic invention in the stories themselves blossoms and proliferates.

The culmination is a magical folktale of consumerism—a modern potlatch, where the city's poor are dressed as Santas by their employers, and laden with gifts to deliver to the children of the rich, who set about destroying them, much to the delight of the Society for the Implementation of Christmas Consumption. It is a highly contrived piece; a fitting flourish to round off a subtle and immensely enjoyable performance.

IRIS MURDOCH'S *The Philosopher's Pupil*[3] is strictly for the devotees, requiring, in an almost literal sense, an act of faith to appreciate it. She postulates a completely acquiescent reader; one to whom her narrator can say of a dog, "it offended Zed in some fastidiousness of his soul, which was clothed in white plumage and burning with ecstasy and love"—and *voilà*, the dog is accepted as an emblem of grace in the reader's mind, without a murmur of protest.

If intentions were indistinguishable from deeds, then *The Philosopher's Pupil* would be a magnificent novel of humankind's thirst for salvation, and events at the imaginary spa town of Ennistone, where the story is set, would glow with sublime spirituality, like a Stanley Spencer triptych. But there is a great gulf between the massively ambitious and complex scheme, and its execution.

Most of my quarrels are covered by the litany of special allowances customarily made for Iris Murdoch's work. There's the blithe reliance on gothic props to create a suitably numinous atmosphere (stone circles, gypsies with second sight, flying saucers, a hot spring in the spa that spurts wildly whenever local feelings run high . . .). Then there is the more or less constant Grade 8 on the Richter scale of dialogue, supplying an emotional pitch that the events themselves seldom warrant. Then, too, there are the pantomime nods and winks by which she wrenches her story of a great philosopher's return to his home town into the sphere of metaphysical significance. Here is Tom, the book's juvenile lead, about to visit the philosopher:

> "Tom found a tie. 'Do you think I should clean my shoes?'
> 'No. You aren't visiting God.'
> 'Oh. Aren't I? . . .'"

Murdoch enthusiasts overlook this coarseness of technique, or even offer it as proof of her illuminatory powers (it isn't stylistic niceties that make her books so good, so it must be real vision, the argument runs). With this particular novel, however, there is something amiss at a level much deeper than that of style.

Take one of the main threads of the narrative: the relationship of John Robert Rozanov, the philosopher, and his former pupil George McCaffrey. George is a man desperately in need of salvation. Some years back he fell foul of his beloved teacher, and to the estrangement that followed is attributed a steady decline in his character; the book opens with him almost murdering his wife. The return of Rozanov to the town, where George also lives, thus provides the prospect of a reconciliation that may save George from committing himself irredeemably

[3] *The Philosopher's Pupil*. By IRIS MURDOCH. Chatto & Windus, £7.95.

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to damnation. Potentially it is a highly dramatic situation, and one positively fizzing with metaphysical implications. But the potential is not realised. What can only be described as a failure of imagination occurs at almost every crucial stage. Murdoch doesn't quite like to present something so out of the ordinary as George's abject dependence on John Robert Rozanov as a *fait accompli*, but her attempts to account for it consist either of inert formulations—

> "John Robert had also mortally wounded George's soul, setting at the same time therein the eternal need to be justified, to be healed, to be saved by the executioner himself"

—or else shrill assertions, in which italics are used with a desperation that suggests a cover-up for a lack of real engagement with the issues:

> "He had had to, *had to,* follow Rozanov to America and once more haunt him. . .. Rozanov had been casual, but somehow *awful* . . . what *was* his crime, was there one, in Rozanov's eyes? . . . was it not *significant* that the philosopher had returned to Ennistone?"

With such shaky foundations, it isn't surprising that the book swiftly begins to take on a diffuse, random nature. No single element of the story has been imagined with sufficient power to give shape or necessity to the rest. By about halfway through, you feel that almost anything could happen, and there's a sense that the author, too, is uneasy about the increasing arbitrariness of the events her scheme demands for its completion. A note of uncertainty enters in the form of apologetic little phrases ("this ludicrous episode" or "this *ridiculous* business") accompanying the more improbable of these events.

It goes without saying that a book by Iris Murdoch of almost 600 pages does not go by without its striking moments. I haven't dwelt on them, because they seem to me largely incidental, not intrinsic to the narrative itself—the success of which, from the point of view of one not graced with blind faith, must be questionable, at best.

IT COULD BE THAT ENGLAND simply doesn't provide adequate settings for novelists who wish, like Iris Murdoch, to make a Big Statement. This isn't, of course, to say that writers such as Gabriel García Márquez or Günter Grass have their work cut out for them. But if you are writing about a culture where a man is honour-bound to kill his daughter for sleeping with a white boy, where the people are tyrannised successively by travesties of democracy and of religious virtue, and where political life consists largely of plots, *coups* and murders then it is perhaps marginally less surprising when you come out with a novel as impressive as Salman Rushdie's *Shame*,[4] which abundantly fulfils the promise of *Midnight's Children*. Excellent as that novel was, it did borrow its shape directly from *The Tin Drum*. *Shame* is a smaller book in every sense, but also a much more original one.

To be geometric for a moment: there is the real Pakistan, and parallel with it there is Rushdie's satirical equivalent, *Peccavistan*, so called after an apocryphal one-word message home from Napier during his campaign—"*Peccavi*", "I have Sind" (the pun's irony is compounded when you are reminded that the prefix *pak* means pure). Most of *Shame* takes place in Peccavistan, where the central story of an epic power struggle between libertine-turned-national-hero Iskander Harappa and his puritanical chief-of-staff, Raza Hyder, is enclosed within the two poles of a "peripheral" story. These two poles are shame and shamelessness; the debased versions of purity and sin that between them cripple every endeavour in the book. Hyder's idiot daughter Sufiya, who enters the world blushing, is the embodiment of shame, and Harappa's lascivious crony Omar Khayyam Shakil—an immunologist entirely immune to the "forbidden emotion of shame"—is shamelessness itself.

Rushdie moves between central and peripheral story with a masterful sense of timing and suspense. Occasionally, too, he sidesteps from the comic horror of Peccavistan to the comic horror of Pakistan where an epic power struggle is emerging between another ex-libertine called Ali Bhutto and an equivocal puritan called General Zia. . . .

This delicately maintained parallel gives Rushdie a latitude which he exploits very skilfully indeed. The excursions into Pakistan proper allow him to act as incisive observer of the politics of Islam, while back in Peccavistan those observations are milked for their rich comic potential. One guarantees the authenticity of the other, and gives it power. The concatenation of reality with Rushdie's intricate and highly stylised imaginative design is sometimes uncannily strong. The section introducing Hyder's wife Bilquìs comes to mind. Bilquìs's father Mahmoud runs Delhi's Empire Cinema in pre-partition days. Moslem-Hindu conflict is about to explode. The current hit film among Hindus is *Gai Wallah*, in which the hero liberates herds of sacred beef-cattle, saving them from the slaughterhouse. Moslems in response pack out the Westerns, where cows get massacred and good guys feast on steaks. In a fit of tolerance—"Time to rise above all this partition foolishness"—Mahmoud decides to book in a double bill: *Gai Wallah* and a Western. He stubbornly shows it to rows of empty seats, until one night someone plants a bomb, and Bilquìs watches as "the walls of her father's Empire puffed outwards like a hot puri."

In miniature, the section characterises what is best about the

[4] *Shame*. By SALMAN RUSHDIE. Cape, £7.95.

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book as a whole. The effortless encapsulation of conflict in the detail of the double bill, the tragi-comic folly of prevailing attitudes evoked in a single sentence of Mahmoud's, the play on Empire, and the perfect visual image of the hot puri deflecting violence into humour; these are the hallmarks of a political satirist of the first order, one in whom the dead weight of history has been grasped with a firmness that can wield it like a rapier.

MOLLY KEANE IS AS QUIRKY A WRITER as I've read. Out of a situation precariously close to cliché—decaying siblings in a decaying Irish country house—she produces in *Time after Time*[5] scenes of startling and idiosyncratic delicacy. The house is Durraghglass, a lesser version of that prototype of decaying Irish splendour, J. G. Farrell's Majestic Hotel. The siblings are April, May, June, and Jasper Swift. June exempted, they are respectively deaf, deformed, and half-blind. On an emotional level, too, they are as maimed a bunch as you could hope to find under one roof. Relative penury—and the last wishes of beloved Mummy—compels them to live together; mutual resentment ensures their isolation.

The narrative unfolds in an engagingly laconic way. We see them bickering together at mealtimes, quarrelling over the use of the car, pursuing their private projects—April with her fitness régime, May with her tweed pictures and flower arrangements, June feeding her pigs, Jasper pottering in his garden. . . . And every so often an allusion is made to a glamorous creature called Leda, who came to visit them when they were all children, enchanted them all, and left under mysterious circumstances. They believe her to have died in the Holocaust. If, however, she survived, and were to return to Durraghglass, there is a sense that she would come as an angel of reconciliation.

Leda does of course return to Durraghglass, and for a moment it seems as if these splendidly spiteful old eccentrics are indeed going to dissolve in a wash of rediscovered love. Fortunately they do not; part of the charm of the story is that just when you think you have the measure of it, you find you've been outwitted. Leda turns out to be a monster of malice and manipulation, plucking and betraying the dearest, guiltiest secrets from the hearts of her hosts, desecrating the memory of their beloved Mummy.

The spectacle of elderly people being cruel to one another has always had a special appeal for novelists. The relative impotence of the combatants and the slow motion this enforces provide great opportunities for displays of subtle authorial inventiveness. Then, too, the pronounced vulnerability of those involved guarantees a high level of poignancy throughout. Molly Keane is more than worthy of her predecessors in this respect. The scenes where, for example, Leda casually annihilates the self-confidence May has spent a lifetime nurturing by forcing herself to become, as she believes, a star performer on the local flower-arrangement circuit despite her deformed hand, have a savagery in them that makes them agonising to read:

> "'She's certainly not like your ghastly flower ladies', Leda went on softly, 'she says they are all simply avid to see you drop a twig out of that brave little hand.'
>
> May felt cold, as if she had stepped without warning into an ice-age of absolute nullity where all triumph froze. 'Brave little hand.' She laid it across her mouth and bit into it with hatred not for her hand, but for those who pitied it."

As a draughtswoman of the surface minutiae of human unkindness, Molly Keane is as vividly immaculate as she is on the more concrete aspects of life at Durraghglass—the food, the clothes, the seedy household pets. She becomes less satisfactory when one questions the grounds for all this unkindness. Leda *is* provided with a motive for her vendetta against the Swifts, but it's nowhere near strong enough to account for the sheer pervasiveness of hatred and discomfort in the book. There's too much of a sense that it is not Leda but Molly Keane herself doing the manipulating and undermining. *Time After Time* seems born of a profound irritation with life. Its almost unredeemed nastiness gives some excellent sport, but the book takes this irritation and nastiness too much for granted ever to become anything more than just that.

[5] *Time After Time*. By MOLLY KEANE. André Deutsch, £7.55.

The Imaginative Franchise

> "*. . . the peculiar truth of poetry may have to be rendered by fictions, or by what, literally, amounts to lies. . . .*"
> MICHAEL HAMBURGER: *The Truth of Poetry*

Does it matter, whether Yeats really stood
Among schoolchildren? Lawrence's snake
Could as easily have slithered out of his skull
As out of that fissure. Were there woods
Frost stopped his horse by, and did there fall
The "darkest evening"? Had Larkin a bike?
Does it have to be true? Suppose the train did not pull
Up at Adlestrop at all. . . .

John Loveday

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MEMOIR

The Committed Guardian

Remembering Raymond Aron—By GOLO MANN

FROM THE LATE 'FORTIES until his death at 78 last month Raymond Aron has been acknowledged as France's most important political journalist, respected even by his opponents, at least those not blinded by dogma, and as an acute analyst with a thorough understanding of philosophy, economics, and sociology. He is the author of significant books in these fields of learning, books which are always illuminating and present both an analytical and a synoptic view. Constantly active and immensely industrious, he managed to produce these books (some long, others short) one after the other, while at the same time remaining—as long as he decently could—chief leader-writer of the *Figaro*. When he had to part company with the great newspaper, he did not give up political writing. He could not. Always alert, always quick to react, he remained conscious of his responsibilities to himself. How alert, how lucid and how concerned he still was in his late 70s is shown in both his last books, *Le Spectateur engagé* and his best-selling *Mémoires*. What did he mean by *Spectateur*? "Spectator" or "observer"? I prefer to take it as meaning "guardian." In any case, the accent has to be on the adjective *engagé*, "committed"—to the point where it hurts—and therefore never uninvolved.

This book of conversations is the record of interviews in which he originally took part for television in December 1980.

GOLO MANN, *the distinguished German historian, first came to know Raymond Aron when they were both students in Germany. They met, as he recalls, quite by accident at the bonfire of books which the Nazis instigated in Berlin in 1933. Mann lived and taught for many years in the USA, and published in* ENCOUNTER *(January 1974) a much-quoted memoir of W. H. Auden. Among his historical works (he is Thomas Mann's youngest son) are studies of Bismarck, Gentz and Wallenstein, and "The History of Germany Since 1789."*

RAYMOND ARON—*a contributor to* ENCOUNTER *from its inception in 1953—died, at the age of 78, in Paris on 18 October. Among his recent contributions to these pages was "Is There a Nazi Mystery?" (June 1980)—Golo Mann's own contribution to the Nazi debate was "Hitler, For the Last Time?" (June 1974). Aron's "My Defence of Our Decadent Europe" appeared in the issues of September and October 1977.*

He was questioned by two men a generation-and-a-half younger than himself. They had grown up in a world at peace, the world of the 1950s and '60s, a world almost without history, as they see it, a "pre-1914" world. Naturally they were left-wing (and still are, though no longer Marxists). Naturally they had thought of Aron most of the time as a reactionary, a cold warrior, and a rigid representative of the old-style university. When they came to realise that he was none of these things, they decided to conduct a public debate with him, to get him to talk by provoking him into telling the story of his life, the history of his thinking and political attitudes. There is no mention of his private life and his family. His friendships are mentioned where they were politically and intellectually significant, as Aron's friendships were bound to be. It was an instructive experience for the two young men: they were dealing with a man who has a stupendous memory and remembers everything he has thought, written and done from the 1920s to the '80s. Quite often they annoy him by putting foolish—perhaps intentionally foolish—or over-repetitive questions. Sometimes, though rarely, he does them the favour of losing his temper.

Many years ago I compared Raymond Aron's mind with a sieve which never lets anything false through. It was an image that needed elaboration. As a writer he was not only a relentlessly accurate critic—his mind was also very positive, not only fending off error, but suggesting truths, and with an elegance, a precision, and a fairness which could illuminate and elucidate the most complicated questions, and for which I could feel nothing but admiration. Now and then he said quite candidly, "I don't know", yet even then he knew a thing or two. (For instance, when asked to say whether General de Gaulle, on his return to power in 1958, was already planning to grant independence to Algeria, he replies that, as a philosopher of history, de Gaulle knew that the age of European colonial empires had gone for ever, but as a politician he may have thought he could postpone the end for just a little while. But more about Aron and de Gaulle presently.)

Eye-witness in Berlin

HE HAD A LONG LIFE. He was a boarder at the celebrated *Ecole Normale Supérieure* in the Rue d'Ulm, the college for the élite, where he had interesting fellow-

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students (Jean-Paul Sartre, among others). He made friendships, some of which lasted, while others faded, or foundered on political differences of which Aron speaks with the sadness of old age. The atmosphere was predominantly *gauchiste,* with retrospective left-wing opposition to the First World War (which his generation experienced between the ages of nine and fourteen), to the policy of revenge pursued by Poincaré, and support for "Franco-German understanding." He studied the classical philosophers—Aristotle, Descartes, Kant. That, he said later, was a waste of time. Surely not! It is one way—though not the only one—to learn the technique of thinking. He had a high regard for Kant, on whom he wrote a dissertation for his final examination and whom he later studied in depth. Of his brief spell as *chef de cabinet* in André Malraux's Education Ministry in 1946 he remarks, "Three hours spent reading Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was harder work than ten hours spent in a government office"—which is why he promptly bowed out.

But the academic world was *trop doux*—too gentle, artificial, and cloistered. Hence his decision to go to Germany—inevitably as an academic, but in a different, more turbulent world. It was also a tradition among young French philosophers: German was—after Greek—the language of philosophy. He spent a year as a *Lektor* at Cologne and two at the Maison Française in Berlin. He was at once struck by the strong and prickly nationalism of the Germans, especially the Berlin students, a mood which went back to 1918–19. At first he did not foresee the worst, nor did I, who was there with him. With characteristic open-mindedness, he saw much that was in total contradiction to the worst and seemed likely to prevent it.

It was a mistake, a mistake we all made. The impressions he got in Berlin, where he attended Nazi rallies, were different. He found Goebbels to be a born orator, while Hitler's German was "abominable", though a "satanic" power emanated from him. Aron sensed this power immediately and uses the word "satanic" several times. At one point he calls Hitler "brilliant but pathological." I am not quite so taken with this description. But never mind—he was probably both these things, and more besides.

Our "spectator" was in Berlin when Hitler seized power and he saw how people "adapted themselves", how students suddenly appeared in brown uniforms—and how the books of liberal or left authors were thrown on the bonfire outside the Humboldt University. It was on that evening that I first met Aron. We stood next to each other, close to the fire, and listened to the speeches. I cannot recall how we came to be there—it must have been by chance. He noticed that I felt sick when books by my relatives were consigned to the flames amid curses, and he showed himself extremely sympathetic and helpful to me. (This was the man whom his interviewers were so fond of describing as an "icy intelligence.") At one point he whispered to me, "When you think of *our* little old politics!", referring to the political life of his own country, so civilised and footling compared with the irrational fury and triumphal hatred being whipped up in Berlin.

This was the experience, this was the insight which he took home with him: this is politics, this is what politics can be like. He returned, moreover, as a student of Max Weber, whom he knew as well as he knew Tocqueville; these were his teachers from now on. He knew his Marx too, though Marx was never his mentor: only the great liberals of the 18th and 19th centuries qualified for that role. He had a hatred, an enduring hatred, of "Marxism-Leninism", of dogmatism, of the refusal to engage in dialogue. But the young Marx he took very seriously, regarding him as something quite different. (On this point I am glad, just for once, to differ seriously from Aron.)

Back in France, he was first a grammar-school master and then a university teacher in the provinces. In France the grammar schools and the university form one academy which is distinct from the primary and general-secondary school-system, *enseignement primaire.* This latter has its own hierarchy culminating in another *Ecole Normale Supérieure* at Saint-Cloud, at which I spent two years as a *lecteur,* living *au pair,* and which I left just before Aron went there as professor. I did not see him from autumn 1933 until autumn 1946, not even in London in 1944, when we could easily have met. It was a sad chance that we did not: our views, our judgments and our destinies coincided often enough, and we had political friends in common (Hermann Rauschning, among others).

During the fateful years from 1933 to 1939 Aron taught and wrote learned works—an Introduction to the Philosophy of History—but he was silent about politics, despite the fact that his thinking was now dominated by the Nazi peril. He realised that the die was cast in March 1936, when German troops marched into the demilitarised Rhineland in violation of the treaty of Locarno, which had been freely concluded by the German *Reich.* Now was the time when France had to act, when she could still do so with superior military force and with no risk of sliding into war. Aron knew this and said so in private, but not in public. And when he said it in private somebody was liable to reply, "If I were in your position I wouldn't talk like that. . . ." In his position? Aron was a Jew, and those he talked to were conscious of the fact. He was conscious of it too, constantly. If a Jew warned against Hitler, he was seen to be doing it in the interests of Jewry, not of France. *Mourir pour les Juifs*? For this reason he thought he must keep quiet. It is well known, after all, that the plague of anti-Semitism was not confined to Germany. It existed everywhere; in fact, I believe that at the turn of the century it was more rife in France than in Germany, not to speak of Eastern Europe. The fact that Aron was Jewish precluded him from playing Cassandra: it was a question of tact.

His Destiny: Reading, Writing, Thinking

As for his "Jewishness", he actually described himself as a French patriot of Jewish ancestry and no religion. Yet the fact that he felt no need of Judaism could not and did not get him off the charge of being a Jew. We find him in a comparable situation during the World War against Hitler (the same situation, according to him, as the Allies were in). Asked what he knew at the time, when he was in London, about the murder of the Jews, he replied that he was not certain how much he knew; certainly he knew about the cruel persecution, but probably not about genocide, about Auschwitz. None of us did. Helmut James von Moltke, working for the counter-

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intelligence service in Berlin, then an "intellectual centre of German resistance", did not know either. Otherwise he would surely have mentioned it in the long, tragic letter he wrote from Stockholm to his English friends, in which he reported all the Nazi atrocities known to him.

It is very hard to say what exactly the leading Allied politicians knew and did not know. All the same, the following fact supports the contention of my friend Aron. In a radio broadcast President Roosevelt once uttered a warning, in his sonorous voice, that all the Germans would pay the just penalty for their "insane crimes." I am convinced that he had in mind the murder of the Jews. But he did not say it in so many words. Why not? Aron thinks it was because British pilots and American GIs would not have understood. The war was being fought against A. H. and his mob, not for the Jews. If the war was won the Jews would be saved, those who had survived. What could be done before that? This, at least, is my explanation—not an altogether satisfactory one.

There was one occasion, Aron says, when being a Jew worked in his favour. That was at the beginning of 1946, when he visited Frankfurt, a city in ruins, and gave a lecture at the newly reopened university. He spoke about the need for a final reconciliation between the Germans and the French and for cooperation between the two nations. Afterwards he was told, "Only you, a Jew, could have done that." Why? Well, nobody could really suspect *him* of devious or partisan pro-German sentiments. In fact he was speaking not as a Jew, but as a wise man who was, despite his alleged iciness, generous at heart, and knew the difference between Germans and Nazis, and between guilty Nazis and those whose Nazism was merely nominal. He was speaking also as one who thought politically. Just like Konrad Adenauer, who is never mentioned in his conversations, he realised as early as the autumn of 1945 that all the countries occupied by the Russians were lost to "Europe" for the foreseeable future and that as a result the "three Allied occupation zones", Western Europe, and the United States must inevitably collaborate in some form of alliance. The task of "the French intellectual" was to prepare the way for the realisation of the inevitable.

Back to 1939. Aron joined up, saw active service, and wanted to be a proper soldier. But men like him, whether they like it or not, are needed elsewhere for their acumen and mental skills. He lived through the fall of France and fled to the south. He then decided to go to England and join de Gaulle, leaving his wife and little daughter behind in Bordeaux. This time he was not in flight: he wanted to go on fighting and become a soldier again when it was possible.

In London, however, he met with the same experience as in France: one of de Gaulle's people drafted him on to the editorial staff of *La France libre*, a Free French monthly that was about to be launched. There he sat and observed, read, thought, and wrote—which seems to have been his destiny. His first contribution was an analysis of the French defeat, of how and why it happened. It was read in proof by de Gaulle himself, who put a "*b*" (for *bien*) against several passages, just like a professor. This was praise indeed: here was a teacher of philosophy who had a good eye for military mistakes and strategic consequences.

This was the start of Aron's military studies and writings—from *Les Guerres en Chaîne*, to the study of War and Peace between Nations, and of Clausewitz. In his two-volume work on Clausewitz he did for the Prussian military philosopher what his old friend Sartre was doing for Flaubert. It was an undertaking on which he expended intense effort and which showed tremendous penetration and breadth of vision in its treatment of the Prussian's influence. (Incidentally it received embarrassingly feeble, and even malicious, reviews in some of my favourite publications.) Aron had studied the military theorists and theorising practitioners from Maréchal de Saxe to the present-day specialists on nuclear war, taking in Napoleon, Jomini, Clausewitz, Moltke, Foch, Ludendorff and Lenin on the way, and in learning from them and disputing about them he secured himself a place in their ranks. This led some to conclude that he had "warlike proclivities." Of course the very opposite was the truth: he studied war because he hated war. Hate is blind without knowledge: it behoves one to know one's enemy.

How peace-loving Aron's cast of mind has always been was proved again during Hitler's war by his judgment on Marshal Pétain and the Vichy government. More than anything else he feared a polarisation of French opinion leading to civil war. What he saw as desirable and sensible was cooperation—tacit of course—between Vichy and de Gaulle. He believed then, and continued to believe, that Marshal Pétain acted in accordance with the wish of the French majority. France had lost one-and-a-half million young men in the first Great War—to no purpose, as was now clear. She had been too weak, too divided, to prevent a second World War when it could have been prevented. She could not fight another with losses on the scale of 1914–18. Hence the capitulation, which was the wish of the silent majority. Pétain's régime assured a measure of autonomy to the south and preserved the French navy, as well as access to the colonies and protectorates in North Africa and the Middle East. Could one, as a good Frenchman, see this as utterly bad? If the Marshal had gone to Algeria in 1942, Aron thinks, France would have been spared the murderous feud between the supporters of Pétain and the supporters of de Gaulle. Maybe. But Pétain did not go to Algeria. Unfortunately for him, he had manoeuvred himself into the position of having to bet on Hitler's winning the war, of having to want him to win it. Instead of going to Algeria he went to Sigmaringen. Aron also wanted to overlook that Pétain's court martial found the General guilty of high treason and sentenced him to death. Desirable though a compromise may have been, it seems likely that none was possible.

After the *Libération* Aron returned to an exhausted France. He saw the end of the war in Paris and compared it with the end of the previous war, in 1918, of which he had a clear recollection. What a difference! In 1918 there had been pride and jubilation everywhere: in 1945, behind the official celebrations, there was grief or glum indifference. It made no sense: for France's role had been so equivocal. Only de Gaulle saw it all differently. He, Aron sensed, identified France with himself: since he had always behaved properly, so had France. Among other enviable gifts, de Gaulle had the ability to turn

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defeats into victories. . . . Aron could now return to his vacant professorship in Bordeaux. But that was not what he wanted. He wanted to stay where the excitement was, in Paris, as a political journalist. It was not until 1955, that, without giving up journalism, he became Professor of Sociology at the Sorbonne. He retained the Chair until he was driven out by the transformation of the ancient university into a factory for mass education. After that he moved to the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes,* the *Institut de France,* a visiting professorship at Harvard—he was showered with honour upon honour (which he did not find entirely repugnant). As a leader-writer he worked first for *Combat,* a newly founded newspaper read by "the whole of France." The trouble was that "the whole of France" was represented by only 40,000 subscribers—not enough. He moved to the *Figaro* (rather than to Beuve-Méry's left-neutralistic *Le Monde*). This was the beginning of the long period, starting in the post-war atmosphere but developing into something different, during which he reached the eminence he enjoyed to the end.

ON HISTORY in general. While Aron acknowledges that certain far-reaching trends may be regarded as inevitable, history as a whole is not predetermined, but open-ended: there are always decisions which went one way, but could have gone another. And in these decisions no mean role is played by stupidity, weakness, and ignorance. At one point Aron remarks of President Giscard d'Estaing, the only French politician with whom he was in substantial agreement, "The drama of Giscard is this: he does not know that history is tragic." Aron forgot this deeply held conviction when he wished for some form of discreet collaboration between Pétain and de Gaulle in 1940–42. For my own part I am not keen on the word "tragic", which is sometimes appropriate, but more often not. According to Aristotle, tragedy requires guilt, unavoidable guilt on the part of a person of high spiritual or moral status. The two great wars of our century were anything but unavoidable: the first was an anachronism, the second pure madness. Aron too sees the last War as the "adventure of one man", without whom any number of things might have happened, but not what did. Naturally he knows that the circumstances under which Hitler was able (as Sebastian Haffner puts it) to "do so much and achieve so little" were unique. The same thing will not happen again.

SOCIALISM. Aron was not always anti-socialist—not when socialism could be conceived as being compatible with civil liberties, which he always regarded as essential. As an economist he believed in the superiority of the market economy. As a logician he was opposed to self-contradictory programmes, to the "squaring of the circle." This is the heading of an article he wrote in 1977 against the economic programme of the *Front commun* of Socialists and Communists. To promise growth and increased investment, while at the same time nationalising the banks and major industries, putting up taxes, raising wages, cutting working hours and giving longer holidays—this was "squaring the circle."

"But", an interviewer objected, "Isn't this an analysis based simply on convictions?"

"No", replies Aron, "what I am offering are convictions based on analyses."

Appreciating Reality

WHAT OF foreign policy, morality and human rights? It must be said that during the Algerian war of the 1950s, the "Dirty War", Raymond Aron dared to express what many thought but lacked the courage to say openly—that the time had come for the recognition of Algeria's independence. He said it in *La Tragédie algérienne*, a book which made a great impact, especially as it came from one who was regarded as a "right-winger." The army was also right-wing; so too were the generals, who carried their opposition to peace to the point of rebellion; and so were the French residents in Algeria. Raymond Aron vehemently insisted that he was neither right-wing nor left-wing. He might adopt a certain position, but not in a partisan spirit: he made his judgments from case to case. Was he perhaps a moralist? Sartre was a moralist, he said; and because he was a moralist he did not think politically. Asked why, during the Algerian war, he never attacked the use of torture (of which the French were all too often guilty), he replied that there was nothing to stop others writing against torture. In any case he never met anyone who was in favour of it. It arose out of the very nature of the Dirty War, fought against guerrillas who for their part did not accept any of the rules of war. To end the torture one had to end the war: that was what he had pleaded for—at first all alone, one lonely figure in France.

As for human rights, they are all very well and good, though also somewhat vague. He is not, he says, one of Hegel's "beautiful souls" (he uses the German phrase *schöne Seele,* which was first coined by Friedrich Schiller). If one were to restrict one's trade and commerce to those states in which all human rights were scrupulously respected at all times, how many states would one be able to do business with? To the objection, "That's naked utilitarianism!", he replied. "No,, just a simple appreciation of reality." Again it is the student of Max Weber speaking, though with none of the stark exaggerations Weber was so fond of (recall his famous, but unedifying, lecture on *Politik als Beruf,* "Politics as a Profession"). Incidentally, I think Aron would have arrived at all his political insights without any help from Max Weber.

What of the USSR or "Marxism-Leninism"? De Gaulle used to speak of "Russia"—and also of "Prussia" and "Saxony"—because he believed in the essentially immutable substance of the European states. Aron insists on speaking of the "Soviets", which of course is a ludicrous abbreviation, though we know what he means. It would be possible to live at peace with a liberal, democratically controlled Russia, even if it were an imperial power, as it became long ago under the Czars. But not with the Marxist-Leninists, because they believe themselves to be in possession of the whole truth and must inevitably hope to make the world subject to this truth. . . . My own answers would make rather finer distinctions—as Aron's usually do. Russian imperialism, in both internal and external affairs, is very old. Lenin, who set out to destroy it, succeeded only in

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intensifying it by combining it with his own Bolshevik dogmatism, and so it has remained until now. The new element acts and reacts powerfully, and the old one is still active too.

With regard to *détente* and the Cold War, for Aron these were two manifestations of the same world-political phenomena, not fundamental alternatives. He disliked the phrase "Cold War", and preferred to speak of a "warlike peace (*paix belliqueuse*)". This, he maintained, is what we have had since 1945, with and without *détente*. He believed in a maxim he coined in 1948: "Peace is impossible, war improbable." This is how we have lived up to now, and this is how we must go on living. It was not, he always insisted, pessimism, nor was it optimism.

Of the Fourth Republic he contended that it was better than its reputation allowed. It saw industrial growth and the start of a prospering consumer society; it brought reconciliation with Germany, in the face of fierce opposition, through a network of European institutions (the European Iron and Steel Community, and so on). But it was faced with two calamities which proved too much for it. . . . The Algerian war . . . and de Gaulle, or Achilles brooding in his tent.

THE GENERAL. Aron was never a real "Gaullist" because basically he had no wish to be a party man. But in his last writings the General appears in a more favourable light than he does elsewhere. After 1945 Aron had frequent personal dealings with him. He liked to send him copies of his books, and he always received (as other writers did) a hand-written letter which was "always interesting." After suffering a profound personal bereavement—the *Mémoires* do, at long last, reveal something of the private Aron—he received a generous and heartfelt letter of condolence from de Gaulle. He visited the General in order to thank him, and de Gaulle told him "in moving terms" of a similar grief which had befallen him. (Believe me, the man was not what he was made out to be. Of course he could be wicked, even ruthless. But what great statesman cannot?) De Gaulle's resignation in 1946 was absolutely inevitable. In the unique position in which history had placed him, de Gaulle had to restore the Third Republic, of which the Fourth was simply a new edition, with all the business of political parties (which he despised), with impotent governments and personalities he knew only too well from the 1930s. He was bound to do this, but he was unable to work with these institutions and personalities. That was why he had to go, yet believing that he would soon return. André Malraux, who was an intimate friend of his at the time, told Aron, "In six months we'll be back." It took twelve years.

The one time when Aron was moved to shout "*Vive de Gaulle*" was in May 1968, the time of the "student revolution", which began with the Sorbonne riots. Aron was a strong supporter of the state and its authority. If that is "right-wing", then he was a right-winger; but there must also be left-wingers with an interest—even a strong interest—in the protection of law and order. In any case he was disgusted by all the nonsense of '68—the shrill demands that were raised (especially on the academic front), the cowardly flight of civil servants from their ministries. Hence he was profoundly grateful to the President of the Republic for being able to restore order and a measure of consensus among the citizens of France: de Gaulle's final political achievement.

Aron is fair and knowledgeable in his comments on many French politicians of lesser standing who were personally known to him and who pass in review in his final reflections. Léon Blum was "the best" of his time, both a socialist and a liberal, a humanist and a man of culture such as one can hardly imagine any longer. But he belonged to the 19th century: he did not understand the age in which he finally came to power as leader of the government of the Popular Front, and above all, being a pacifist, he did not understand Nazi dictatorship. Paul Reynaud (the luckless prime minister of the spring and early summer of 1940) was "a shining light", but not the man who was needed at the time—a commander with no troops. About President René Coty, who came to grief over Algeria, he tells the story of how he once summoned him for an interview, during which the President did all the talking—and then thanked him for a very interesting conversation. Just what happened to the great Tocqueville, Aron adds: in his *Mémoires* Tocqueville tells of a similar "conversation" he had with the vain and loquacious Louis-Philippe. What I always wanted to tell Aron is that it also happened to Bismarck several times in 1848, when he was summoned to the presence of Princess Augusta (who later became Empress). Each time she dismissed him with warm thanks for letting her hear his opinions, "although I never got the chance to express any. . . ." Conversations in which one partner is superior intellectually, and the other hierarchically, form an amusing and timeless *topos*. Of President Georges Pompidou, Aron recounts that he once summoned him to the Elysée, where they had an extremely pleasant chat. Shortly afterwards he criticised a presidential decision with some acerbity. This disloyalty aroused great indignation in the President's entourage. The President himself simply observed dispassionately, "One can never count on Raymond Aron."

Our *spectateur engagé* was pleased by the remark, which was reported to him; there may have been an element of coquettishness in his pleasure, though he took it seriously, not just as a joke: "That's what I'm really like." It is not the disloyalty of the artist as seen by Brecht, "*In mir habt ihr einen, auf den könnt ihr nicht bauen* (In me you have someone you can't rely. on)"—but loyalty to one's own difficult existence.

What he owed the rulers was neither blind support nor doctrinaire hostility—he owed them his independent judgment on each troublesome case as it came up, a sharply independent judgment which had its roots in reflected experience, intellectual acumen, and moral courage. This accounts for the uniqueness of the position he occupied both in France and far beyond her borders. And this is what makes his life's work so rich and so fascinating.

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LETTERS

Marquand's SDP

PROFESSOR DAVID MARQUAND'S perceptive article on the SDP (April 1983) and its achievements over the past two years identifies the major intellectual tradition from which much of its policies are derived—Fabianism—and argues also for further development of social democratic thinking on "the proper limits of the state."

I have no disagreement with the tenor of the argument but there is a contradiction between the Fabian strand of thinking and developing a more critical and popular radicalism "for Dissent against the Establishment"; and it is unlikely that the latter will easily displace the former either in the SDP or elsewhere in the British political arena. Fabianism relies on Government intervention, and in Britain it has become firmly entrenched however much Mrs Thatcher tries to dislodge it. I too detect a strand within the SDP which rejects Fabian alternatives; but it is weak and hardly finds expression in SDP meetings. Regretfully I suspect that it is weaker than the more socialist-inclined minority who have already begun to coalesce in the Council for Social Democracy.

More seriously, does the SDP really tackle the major problem that faces Britain? David Marquand wrote in ENCOUNTER, December 1980:

> "Our crisis of economic maladaptation is a British crisis. . . . It is a crisis of the British class system, the British educational system, the British banking system, British managers, British trade unionists, British civil servants and British politicians."

Reading SDP policy documents suggests that while the surface will be scratched, Marquand's "gleams of gold-dust" are too few to deal with the situation about which he wrote so persuasively in 1980, and perhaps this is why the SDP's early promise has become a little faded.

ROGER FOX

Thames Polytechnic
London

Buzz Words: "Caring"

THE boxed insert "On Buzz Words" which appeared in your April issue mentioned use of the jargon "caring parents [who] can be irresponsible mothers and fathers afraid of the unpopularity and effort generated by discipline."

It's happening all over. I refer you to a story in the May 7 issue of the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. Two brothers were arrested on "cocaine-related charges." The Peters family put up two homes and the family jewels (worth over $6 million dollars) to bail out their sons. A 14-count indictment accuses the two brothers of operating a cocaine ring that netted $17 million dollars a year. The *Sentinel* reported that Mrs Peters had "the concern, affection, and pity of some of her neighbors, former neighbors and associates. . . ." It added:

> "The educator, Doris Stacy, recently re-elected President of the Milwaukee School Board, remembered [Mrs] Peters from hearings on the multicultural school 10 years ago.
>
> 'She was a gentle, caring, direct, child-oriented person', Stacy said."

Or as D. J. Enright said (ENCOUNTER, July–August), "the darkness beyond words. . . ."

DOROTHY L. LICHTY

Port Edwards
Wisconsin

Koestler's "Intuition"?

JOHN WAIN writes on p. 46 of your September-October issue that Arthur Koestler, when writing *Darkness at Noon*, had apart from intuition very little to go on.

How is it possible that he and your editorial staff could have forgotten Stalin's Show Trials in the late 1930s, when nearly all old "comrades" like Bukharin and Radek were liquidated, not to speak of the generals?

H. H. GUTTENSTEIN

London

Gandhi

I SEE THAT Sir Richard Attenborough (*The Times*, 14 May) complains that "certain sections of the British press seem determined not only to denigrate the movie, but also to blacken the character of the man who is its central theme." I have sought to do neither. In my original comment on the film, in your March number, I accepted that it has entertainment value; and, as Sir Richard says, "Film is an entertainment medium." But it is a bad representation of Gandhi's relationships with the British rulers of India and with the Muslim community; and it has little more historical value than a novel. I accept Gandhi's great qualities as an astute politician and his genuine discouragement of violence. But his policies and those of his Congress Party colleagues in fact led to violence, not only between his followers and the authorities but, more importantly, between Hindus and Muslims. These communal differences both delayed substantially progress to independence and made partition its price.

Certainly there has been a good deal of press criticism of the film's claim to document history, rather on the lines of my contribution to your columns. For example Peter Ackroyd in *The Spectator*, H. V. Hodson (*Sunday Times*, 17 April) and Paul Johnson (*Daily Telegraph*, 7 May) follow the same line. Salman Rushdie (*The Times*, 2 May), against whom Sir Richard's thunderbolts in *The Times* are primarily directed, is also critical for reasons different from mine. (He dubbed the film "inadequate as biography, appalling as history, and often laughably crude as a film.")

I AM GLAD THAT Michael Thorpe from New Brunswick ("Letters", December) shares my doubt about the suitability of films for the portrayal of history. Historians can spread themselves in books and thus balance different points of view; and they can write books challenging each other's assessments. Sir Richard Attenborough's film has a monopoly as regards Gandhi among cinema-goers. Moreover, within a mere three-hour run, it must stick to a simple theme, and the theme chosen is grossly unbalanced.

Mr Rushdie is not quite right in saying that British opinion was behind General Dyer. Detailed news of what happened at Amritsar in April 1919 spread slowly, because of censorship, congested telegraph lines, lack of news-reporters, and the competition of an Afghan war in May. Astonishing as it is to us in these days of instant journalism, it was not until Dyer condemned himself in his own evidence to Lord Hunter's committee of enquiry early in December 1919 that the horror of the affair appeared. While some Europeans (the *Morning Post* being the only representative among the London newspapers) still thought that Dyer had been justified in his actions, the weight of British opinion saw that what he did was indefensible, but nevertheless took exception to the way in which he was removed from his command without trial. There was fear that, because of the open prejudice of Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, against firm government and his inept handling of Dyer's case, other officers who might make errors in dealing with disorder under stress would be similarly punished, and that in consequence officers would in future "play safe." This was the key-note of the debates on the Hunter Report in both Houses of Parliament in July 1920.

After the Hunter Committee took evidence, but before it reported, the Congress Party set up an enquiry of their own under Gandhi. Its purpose was, not to discover the truth, but to blacken the British. It visited the Punjab in March 1920, nearly a year after the Amritsar affair, and received evidence. Congress lawyers had tutored their witnesses long in advance (it is, sadly, a not uncommon practice in India). M. R. Jayakar, who helped in the enquiry and was subsequently a distinguished judge on the Indian Federal Court and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, tells us in his autobiography that these witnesses recorded their evidence in answer to a duplicated questionnaire and were not subjected to the probing cross-examination which those before the Hunter Committee underwent. Gandhi rejected only the wildest allegations, the inclusion of which

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would have palpably discredited his report. Some historians, including perhaps Mr Wolpert and Mr Draper whom Michael Thorpe calls in aid, have accepted the dubious material which resulted.

ONE OF THE STORIES given currency was that, during the shooting of Amritsar, some of the crowd jumped into a well inside the Jallianwala Bagh, and this is duly given prominence by Sir Richard Attenborough. It was investigated at the time; the well was searched; and nothing was found to substantiate the tale. Nothing seems to have been said before the Hunter Committee to suggest that women were present in the Jallianwala Bagh, although some teen-age males may well have been there. For over a year after the Punjab disturbances, the Viceroy was inundated with enquiries from Montagu about all their aspects. Montagu's mind was dominated by desire to get at the truth, and he pursued any rumour however improbable. I went through all this correspondence some years ago, and it contains no reference at all to the possibility of women having been present. A recent event in Germany emphasises the need for historians, newsmen, and perhaps film-producers to take care about the provenance of their sources.

THOSE INTERESTED in Gandhi's varying relationships with British authorities and with his Congress brethren may like to look at two highly professional historical accounts by Dr Judith Brown of Manchester University, namely *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915–22* and *Gandhi and Civil Disobedience 1928–34* (both published by the Cambridge University Press, in 1972 and 1977 respectively). The period 1945–47 is admirably dealt with in Robin Moore's *Escape from Empire*, published this year by the Oxford University Press.

ALGERNON RUMBOLD

West Clandon
Surrey

Defending the Old Script

THE SHORT selection from Cecil Hourani ["The Calligraphic Revolution", ENCOUNTER, February] on the need to devise a new Arabic script to facilitate typography misses the point. Hourani is quite right in identifying Arabic as a difficult language for the purposes of typography. This is a feature it shares with a number of other well-known languages—such as Japanese and Chinese, both of which have entered the computer age without losing the basic structure or beauty of their written scripts.

Why should we discard the grace and beauty of the Arabic script, in order to set type? We are beyond the Age of Gutenberg now. Hot metal typesetting is a thing of the past. The computer and the ink-jet and laser printers allow us now to store and print out any type of script while maintaining its individual beauty.

The difficulty with Arabic type is not so much one of replacing the calligrapher's hand with the ink-jet printer as the choice of the language that will be intelligible to most of the Arabic audience. The diversity of scripts, coupled with the difference between Classical Arabic—in many ways the "*Lingua Franca*" of the Arab world—and the many dialects of Arabic prevalent today, complicate the choice of a unified printed script.

There are said to be more than a dozen Arabic scripts in use today—*naskh, ruk'a, farisi, Kufic, rihani, thuluth, diwani,* and so on. Each style demands a certain amount of prior knowledge of the subject of the text to be totally intelligible, since the use of diacritical marks varies considerably with the choice of scripts. And the lack of these marks can prompt a reader to misconstrue the meaning of particular words and phrases!

In the 1960s, Said Akle, the Lebanese poet and thinker, followed the example of Kemal Atatürk in Turkey in 1929, by attempting to write the Lebanese Arabic dialect in Latin characters. Much though one appreciates the attempt to universalise Arabic and similar languages in this fashion, one can only lament the effort to discard the art of the traditional scripts.

The investments being made in the search for better computerisation of traditional Arabic scripts for the purpose of reproduction will not be in vain. They may allow the Arab world to communicate rapidly, using known, common symbols. And they may point the path for similar other languages, such as Urdu and Persian, to leap from calligraphy to computerised typesetting.

On the other hand, the search for a new script, as Hourani suggests, may slow down the entry of the Middle East into the Modern World.

SHUJA NAWAZ

Washington, D.C.

AUTHORS

Zbigniew Herbert, one of Poland's best-known writers, has recently completed a new collection of poems, entitled *Report from the Besieged City*: the Polish text is to be published shortly by *Kultura,* in Paris. His *Selected Poems* are published by Oxford University Press and Penguin Books. "Mirror", which Herbert describes not as a short story but as an "apocrypha", will be included in a collection of such pieces, to be called *Attila's Fiancée.*

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph* in London, and author of *The Senate of Lilliput* (Faber, 1983).

Rose Tremain, who was included in Granta's "The Best of Young British Novelists", also writes for radio and television. "The Stately Roller-Coaster" will form part of her first collection of short stories, *The Colonel's Daughter*, which Hamish Hamilton are to publish early in February. Her novels *The Cupboard* and *Sister Benedicta* were reissued last year in paperback by Arena, who this January also bring out her earliest novel, *Sadler's Birthday*; all were first published in hardback by Macdonald.

John Spurling's play *The British Empire* (Marion Boyars, 1982) was broadcast in an adapted version on BBC Radio 3; his earlier play *Coming Ashore in Guadeloupe* was first performed at the Harrogate Festival in 1982, and toured the country after its presentation in Edinburgh and London. He is art critic for the *New Statesman*, and has just published a study of Graham Greene (in Methuen's Contemporary Writers series).

Alan Brownjohn is a freelance critic and poet. His *Collected Poems* were published this autumn by Secker & Warburg.

Ronald Hayman's *Brecht: A Biography* was published this autumn by Weidenfeld, who in 1981 brought out *K*, his biography of Kafka. Among his books on theatre are studies of Arnold Wesker, Artaud, Edward Albee, Eugène Ionesco, Harold Pinter, John Osborne, John Whiting, Samuel Beckett, and Tom Stoppard.

James Lasdun, who received an Eric Gregory Award for poetry in 1982, was born in 1958. He now works in London as a publisher's reader. His short stories have appeared in various anthologies and literary magazines, and his literary criticism in the *Times Literary Supplement* and other journals.

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Life & Letters Today

East Berlin

FRÄULEIN NO MORE: **In both halves of Germany, East and West, the use of the word** *"Fräulein"* **is fast going out of fashion. In the East German magazine "Deine Gesundheit (Your Health)" a whole series of letters objected to the standard term for unmarried females, and called for all DDR governmental authorities and "labour collectives" to cut loose from the ancient notion that a female becomes a** *Frau* **only when she becomes a dependant of a male. The editors agreed that the word** *"Fräulein"* **in an epoch of emancipation was a humiliation. Females who have taken their place in society and have occupational achievements surely deserve to be called** *Frau* **whether they are married or not.**

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

Kassel

SEXUAL INEQUALITY: *A West German Court rejected the suit of a young doctor who claimed "Mutterschaftsgeld" (Motherhood money) on behalf of his son and his working wife. Inasmuch as his wife was in employment he was obliged to take care of the baby during its first year, and he sued in the name of the equality of the sexes. The judges were unimpressed and decided that the special payment of "Motherhood money" was a special one based on well-known special differences. The constitutional guarantee of "sexual equality" was not here relevant.*

SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG (Munich)

London

COLONIAL STYLE: **Tintin and his dog Snowy (left) and Asterix the Gaul, the cartoon heroes, are facing charges in the London Borough of Brent of "racism and sexism."**

If the case is found proved books featuring them are likely to be removed from the shelves of the borough's libraries. Complaints have been made by librarians about the "highly offensive" image of black people portrayed.

At the borough's Town Hall library, Mr Christopher Dunn, a children's book specialist, pointed out the dilemma of banning two of the most popular characters they stock.

> *"I would not be sorry to see them go", he said, "but the children probably would. All comic books deal in stereotypes and the problem is that the children may absorb this and think that all black people run around in grass skirts."*

Brent Council has a policy of not displaying books that it considers racist or sexist and so the borough librarian is examining Tintin and Asterix.

Tintin, created by Hergé, the Belgian cartoonist Georges Remi, who died in March, is considered to be the worst offender. The series first appeared in the 1930s and is undoubtedly a product of the colonial era.

THE TIMES

Paris

NEW WORDS: *The 1984 edition of "Petit Larousse Illustré," France's most popular dictionary, out yesterday, brings its usual spate of neologisms and fashionable slang. It appears impervious to the purism of the French Academy and official disapproval of "Franglais."*

*This year the sturdy perennial has not shied away from a new meaning of "***fourmi***," correctly an ant, but today slang for "a little drug peddler hanging about outside schools."*

*New words include: for an examination crib "***antiseche***," and for a teen-age dance, "***la boum***," with educational jargon terms like "***scolariser***" for sending a child to school.*

The new "Larousse" contains 3,000 modifications from last year and brings to 5,000 the changes since the big overhaul of 1980-81, which sold one million copies.

*"***Porno***" is now in, as are domestic terms formerly eschewed like "***nettoyant***" for cleaner and "***caddie***" for shopping-trolley.*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Bonn

SEXISM: *Women demonstrators, banging drums and saucepan lids, marched from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Youth and Families here yesterday to hammer home their claim that "everyday violence and sexism" are part of a mentality leading to nuclear war.*

The Bonn contingent of a country-wide women for peace demonstration handed out thousands of copies of a cartoon showing an officer with a phallic missile between his legs assuring a cowering woman: "This is to protect you."

THE GUARDIAN

London

"WHO/WHOM": **Sir, Surely the word "***whom***" is now a pretentious archaism.**

The ordinary person's reaction to it is expressed in the following reported telephone conversation:

"To whom am I speaking?"

"Sorry, wrong number. Nobody we know says whom."

THE TIMES

London

VICTORIAN: **GLC Left-Wingers who run London are thinking of granting up to £200,000 for a park display showing nude figures, some of them having sex.**

The squat figures, made of ceramic stoneware and "nicely suntanned" in the words of their creator Mr John Peck, are the central characters in a model village to be set up in Victoria Park, Hackney, London, E.

Mr Peck, a 40-year-old architectural photographer as well as a sculptor, said yesterday:

> **"The figures are caricatures. Their gestures are an important part of the art. A couple having sexual intercourse are doing it in bed.**
>
> **"We want to show ordinary life as it really is. Everyone's private parts are shown but not, in my opinion, in an erotic way."**

People in the boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets would, he said, be allowed to see the village free of charge.

DAILY MAIL

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History in Natural and Other Varieties

Natural

COSTA RICAN NATURAL HISTORY

Edited by **Daniel H. Janzen**

A landmark publication in tropical biology with worldwide application. Splendidly illustrated, combining the expert knowledge of 174 contributors.

Artistic

HOW NEW YORK STOLE THE IDEA OF MODERN ART *Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*

Serge Guilbaut. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer

Guilbaut follows the complicated, intertwining relationship between art, politics, and ideology that led to the shift of artistic excitement from Paris to New York in the period after World War II. Illus.

Medical

PRINCES AND PEASANTS

Smallpox in History

Donald R. Hopkins

A fascinating account of some of the innumerable ways smallpox has changed the course of history, wreaking havoc impartially on the famous and the obscure. Illus.

Economic

HISTORY–THE HUMAN GAMBLE

Reuven Brenner

In a strikingly original view of human affairs, Brenner theorizes about why certain ideas catch fire at certain times and what makes people ready to gamble on innovations in science, art, business, and politics.

Cultural

THE ROMANCE OF COMMERCE AND CULTURE *Capitalism, Modernism, and the Chicago-Aspen Crusade for Cultural Reform*

James Sloan Allen

The lively story of how art and ideas formed alliances with consumer capitalism in mid-twentieth-century America and of how the "corporate image" was born. Illus.

Asian

WOMEN, THE FAMILY, AND PEASANT REVOLUTION IN CHINA

Kay Ann Johnson

Johnson exposes the gap between what the Chinese Communist party claims to believe about women's rights and family reform and what its actions reveal.

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